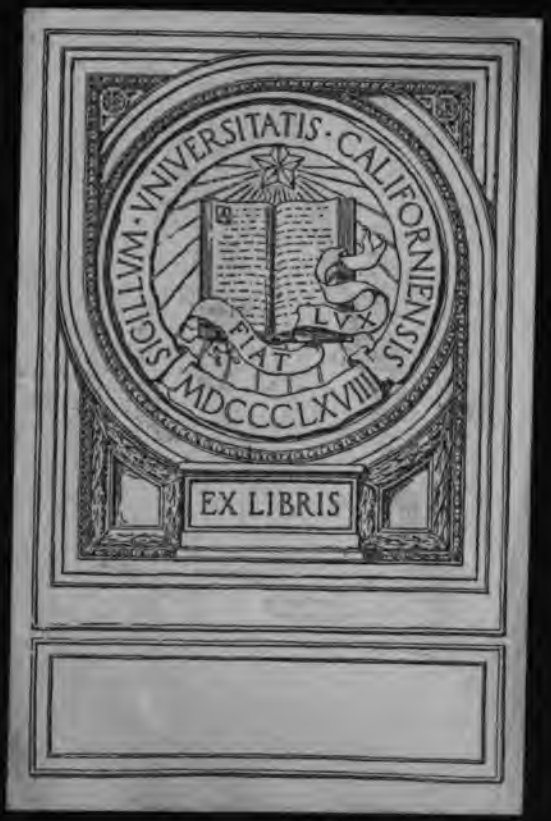
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THE CORRESPONDENCE

OF

MADAME DU NOYER

LONDON: RICHARD BENTLEY & SON: 1890.

[illegible]

FRANCE

IN TWO VOLUMES VOL. [illegible]

LONDON

Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen

1890

[illegible]

THE CORRESPONDENCE

OF

MADAME DU NOYER,

TRANSLATED AND EDITED

BY

FLORENCE L. LAYARD

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. I

LONDON
RICHARD BENTLEY & SON, NEW BURLINGTON STREET
Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen
1890

Printed by R. & R. Clark, *Edinburgh.*

TO

MY FRIENDS

E. E. STRIDE, W. Y. FLETCHER

AND

R. H. CAUNTER

OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK AS A TOKEN OF SINCEREST REGARD

AND IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THEIR

UNFAILING KINDNESS AND VALUABLE ASSISTANCE

PREFACE

THERE has been no period of history richer in autobiographical memoirs and letters than that of the reign of Louis XIV; the result of this is that we know more of the inner life, social and domestic, of the personages of this reign than we do of that of any other monarch in the annals of France; and any fresh light thrown on this most entertaining department of literature adds to the interest as well as to the instruction of the reader whose tastes lie in this direction.

Postal arrangements in those days were irregular, and this fact induced a more detailed correspondence than afterwards, when the transit of letters was cheaper and more frequent. People knew that the letter they were writing would have to fill up a long gap of silence, and they therefore put their best efforts into their correspondence with their friends, and took care to make what they were writing entertaining and comprehensive, so that no item of news or gossip, or even scandal, should be omitted; it is

thus that we obtain, in perusing these memoirs and letters, such extraordinarily graphic accounts of current events, almost photographic in their seizure of the *minutiæ* of daily life.

In these slipshod days of hasty careless writing sufficient pains are not bestowed on good composition; we live in an age when everything has to be done, or "got through," as the phrase is, in a sort of scramble, to get it in at all into our present crowded lives. It is therefore a sort of mental rest to turn to these leisurely-written letters and judge for ourselves how our forefathers "lived and moved and had their being."

A translation of the letters of Madame Du Noyer was published somewhere about the year 1728; but it is an untrustworthy edition, a great part of the contents having been omitted and altered; the work is therefore defective and unreliable. It caused, after its publication in the original French form, so much anger amongst the families of persons at that time still living that the book was suppressed, both in Paris, Cologne, and Amsterdam, and afterwards brought out in London by a Huguenot publisher, Jean Nourse, from whose complete edition this translation has been made.

In presenting these letters of Madame Du Noyer to the reader, as well as the accompanying biographical sketch, the translator feels confident

that those to whom the almost obsolete Court-French of the reign of Louis XIV is unfamiliar, perhaps quite unintelligible, will find as much pleasure in their perusal as in that of a moving and interesting romance. As has been remarked elsewhere in this work, coarseness disfigures the pages of Madame Du Noyer and her unknown correspondent, but this is a fault of the period in which they lived. Such portions as are unfit for translation have been omitted, but it is impossible to weed away all but such as are too outrageously glaring for reproduction in the pages of a modern work.

No dates have been assigned to the letters, as those given in the footnotes have been deemed sufficient. Wherever it has been possible footnotes have been appended, in order to identify initials given in blank, names of places, persons, and towns, and the occurrence of such events as Madame Du Noyer mentions in her letters. That the task has been no light one the reader may form a notion from the fact that the translator has been occupied upwards of two years in gleaning the necessary information for making these footnotes as complete as possible. Where the authority is quoted verbally, the source of information is appended; where the latter has been obtained from numerous scattered sources, the abbreviation (*Trans.*) has been subjoined. On all points such information has been

most carefully sifted and compared, and may in every instance be relied on as absolutely trustworthy.

FLORENCE L. LAYARD.

LONDON, 11*th October* 1889.

NOTE.—It may interest book-collectors and the readers of these memoirs to learn that the translator obtained the curious old edition of Madame Du Noyer's Letters, from which this translation has been made, from a dirty and gloomy little shop, in an equally dirty and gloomy alley in the City, amidst an *omnium gatherum* of old iron, old boots, old bedsteads, rags, etc., heaped up in indescribable disorder, amidst which shone various valuable gems in the shape of old books and old prints, the whole presided over by a veritable Shylock in greasy gaberdine and cap; evidently so far gone in his dotage from old age, want, and poverty as to let seven quaint odd volumes of various series pass into the translator's hands for the enormous sum of *two shillings and three pence;* the Letters of Madame Du Noyer costing THREEPENCE out of the general amount! On searching lately for the shop, or

more properly hovel, whence these treasures were exhumed, its place knew it no more, and the translator was informed that Shylock had been gathered to his fathers, the informant adding that "all the rubbidge had been sold in lots!"—(*Trans.*)

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IN VOL. I

BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION.

THE elder Dumas has said somewhere in one of his works that the life of every man or woman contains a romance which is more or less worthy of interest according to the character of the individual, and the variety and picturesqueness of the incidents which go to form the plot of his or her life's history. Some lives there are which, pursuing "the even tenor of their way," present so few circumstances of note that they seem scarcely worth the study of those who would make them the object of their research. Again, there are other lives which present an ever-moving picture of extraordinary and exciting variety and interest, and exemplify to its fullest extent the old adage, "Truth is stranger than fiction."

Under the category of romantic and interesting lives we may certainly place that of Madame Du Noyer, the writer of these "Letters to a Friend," for not only does she therein "set down" with can-

did and humorous outspokenness the principal events in her own life, but also those of such persons, high or low, gentle or simple, with whom she comes in contact, touching with a witty and good-natured pen their little foibles and characteristics, and not sparing even herself when relating incidents that concern her own adventures and opinions in her strange and chequered career.

The readers of these autobiographical letters will not fail to discern the strong powers of observation displayed by Madame Du Noyer in the descriptions she gives of her travels, the provinces through which she journeys, the people she meets, the customs and antiquities of the towns and cities in which she sojourns, and the acuteness of her remarks on current social and historical events, and on important political situations.

She appears to have been a woman of strong individuality, brilliant intellectual capacity, and great social tact and kindliness of disposition, judging from the strong attachment shown to her by those persons whom she mentions in her memoirs and in this collection of letters. It is impossible, in the comparatively limited space of a short biographical introduction, to enter into a detailed account of *all* the events of Madame Du Noyer's romantic life; but a great portion of them will be related in her own vivid words in the accompanying letters.

It is only my purpose to touch in this introduction upon the *principal* points of interest in her career in order to give the readers of her letters a

better understanding of the dovetailing of the incidents which compose the history of her life. Hereafter, perhaps, leisure may be found to offer the reader a translation of her curious memoirs as a companion volume to this equally curious collection of letters, both volumes being of valuable historic interest, and written with perfect truthfulness and an entire absence of all exaggeration or mere book-making effect, a fact that may be proved by comparing *her* descriptions of places, persons, and events with trustworthy histories and memoirs of contemporary writers and historians. I have not been able to discover on what day or in which month Madame Du Noyer was born, but this much is certain that she came into what proved for her truly a vale of tears in the year 1663 at Nîmes.

Her name was Anne Marguerite, and she was the daughter of Monsieur Petit, a worthy gentleman of Languedoc, who, although not noble himself, was allied by blood and marriage to many of the noblest families in the province. He seems, from what his daughter says of him, to have been very wealthy, and to have lived in a style which in England would correspond with that of a rich county squire of good birth and large property. He was a kind and faithful husband, which (as his daughter remarks several times in her letters) was a rare virtue in the century in which he lived, and, besides this, he was an affectionate and judicious parent.

Anne's mother was a woman in every way worthy, by her talents and virtues, of being the wife of such

a man, and her birth was quite equal to that of her husband, for she also could claim relationship with the noblest and oldest families of Montpellier. Her maiden name was Mademoiselle Cotton, and it is stated by her daughter that she was of the same family as Père Pierre Cotton or Coton, the famous Jesuit Confessor of the kings Henri IV and Louis XIII.

Anne frequently speaks in her memoirs of her uncle Cotton, her mother's brother, to whose kindness in her troubles she seems to have been frequently deeply indebted. The happy married life of Monsieur and Madame Petit was, unfortunately, of short duration; their union, which took place in 1660, came to an untimely end in 1663 or 1664. Madame Petit's first child was a son, who died before Anne's birth. She was born, as has been already mentioned, in 1663. From the day of her daughter's birth Madame Petit sank into a rapid decline, and died whilst still quite a young woman, leaving her husband inconsolable for her loss and deeply perplexed in mind as to how he, a solitary man, should bring up or take care of an infant girl of scarcely a year old.

At this critical juncture, when he was reflecting whether he should confide her to the charge of some worthy nuns of his acquaintance, or engage some one to look after the child, his anxiety was relieved by an offer from an unexpected quarter.

His wife's elder sister and her husband, Monsieur and Madame Saportas, came forward and offered (as

they had no children of their own) to adopt the little Anne Marguerite, and make her their heiress.

After a short deliberation Monsieur Petit accepted their proposal with gratitude, and the little motherless girl was made over to her generous and kindly relatives.

From this time to her marriage Anne continued to live with them in perfect happiness, and was treated with all the care and tenderness due to a fondly loved daughter.

Throughout her memoirs Anne speaks of this aunt, Madame Saportas, in terms of the most devoted affection and admiration, and says that she replaced to her in every way the mother whom she had lost when too young to appreciate what that loss might have been to her under different circumstances.

We learn from Anne that her aunt was one of the loveliest women of the society of her day, and remarkable for her beauty even amongst many other women of acknowledged loveliness; and that she was no less remarkable for her virtue and modesty and piety than she was for her wit, her intellectual faculties, and her brilliant social qualities. It is pleasant, in pages that are naturally a mirror of the times in which Madame Du Noyer lived, to find, amidst the licentious corruption and abandoned profligacy of that period, such an exceptional and gracious record as she gives us of her sweet young mother and lovely and talented aunt. She sums up several paragraphs of eulogy by saying that "Madame Saportas was fit to bring up a queen!"

The little Anne proved herself well worthy of all the tenderness and care lavished on her. She grew up a child of extraordinary talent and intuitive powers of observation, with a wonderful memory and great quickness and aptitude in learning all that was set before her; in fact, she says she was looked upon as a species of infant prodigy.

Thus time passed on in Anne's early days; a pleasant life in the midst of great luxury and comfort, and varied by periods of study and visits to various Huguenot friends in the lovely province of Languedoc; for both Monsieur and Madame Saportas were of the old *Religion Réformée*, and brought up their adopted daughter in the same good and wholesome tenets as they themselves professed.

However, "in the midst of sunshine oft comes the storm," and such was the case with the happy little family in Montpellier. Anne seems to have seen her father from time to time, but her home was entirely with her beloved uncle and aunt, and it was this home, which had been to her all that was sweetest and best in her life, that was to be shaken to its foundations and finally broken up, with many a heartache and bitter tear of regret for days gone never to return.

From what Anne says of her uncle, he appears to have been a sort of land-conveyancer and purchaser of properties and estates for agricultural and other purposes, and by his honesty and foresight had, with benefit to himself and his employers, amassed a large fortune; but this prosperous state of

things was not destined to last. Political complications, disastrous wars, fraudulent and extortionate taxation, and extravagant royal mistresses plunged the nation into misery and poverty, political as well as social.

It was natural, under these circumstances, that the few should suffer for the many, the honest for the dishonest. A wave of disaster swept over the heads of those who had hitherto held their own by sheer devotion to their professions and to their sovereign in spite of all adverse circumstances. As Crowe says (*History of France*, vol. ii. p. 88), "The best proof of the disorder of the finances under Fouquet is that for the last four years of his administration no accounts whatever were forthcoming of the revenue or the expenditure. In a series of years taxes had been heaped on taxes, the receipt not increasing. The customs especially had been so severe that regular commerce was sacrificed completely to the contraband trade, the product of the duties diminishing as the duties themselves mounted up; and agriculture had been treated with an equal lack of mercy and of wisdom. Colbert, the new finance superintendent, found matters in this state, with arrears and debts amounting to twice the ninety millions of livres at which the year's revenue was computed."

Monsieur Saportas was one of the first to succumb to this political crash. For a time he kept his head above water, but fate was too strong for him, and, like many other fellow-sufferers in the financial

disasters of the time, he sank beneath the waves of misfortune to rise no more.

The war with Holland, and the consequent agricultural depression arising from the over-taxation on all land-produce, was the immediate cause of this disaster. Préchac, in his *Life of the Marquise de Meyrac, the female Mousquetaire,* inveighs in bitter words against the miseries that were overshadowing his beloved land of France: "Jugez," he says, "à combien d'insultes ces malheureux sont exposés sous le règne de Louis le Grand; tout cela se termine d'ordinaire par quelque grosse taxe, qu'ils leur font payer sur le champ et les laissent après, paisibles pour quelque temps; mais la persécution recommence dès qu'ils font une perte nouvelle, ce qui arrive si souvent, que la plupart ont été obligés de se retirer."

Such also was the case with the unfortunate Monsieur Saportas. He too was obliged "to retire;" but he was not even then allowed to rest in peace. The King's sheriffs pursued him with a warrant for his arrest on the plea of non-payment of taxes, and he was thrown into prison.

But after two or three months of suffering, during which time his relatives and friends and sorrowing wife had been doing all in their power to effect his liberation, he was allowed to leave the dreary walls of his prison on condition that he should find some solvent persons of position to become bail for him. At this critical juncture four true friends in need came forward and bailed him out. These were

Monsieur Guirard Magaloti, Monsieur de Faure, Monsieur de Vestric, and Monsieur Baudan.

Afterwards, some compromise was effected, and he was permitted to consider himself free of all further molestation from the Government "harpies," who had worked him such ill, and, broken in spirit and in fortune, retired in 1672 to the beautiful little town of Orange, where he died six years after, in 1678, having been in failing health ever since his imprisonment.

Madame Du Noyer, in Letter V, speaks of the charming scenery and agreeable attractions of Orange (from which province the Stadthouders of Holland and its crown princes draw their secondary title), and it was hoped that its soft climate and genial society would have re-established Monsieur Saportas's broken health, but such hopes proved futile, and the aunt and niece saw their beloved relative sink into the grave, shattered alike in body and mind, whilst still in the prime of life.

As may be supposed, Madame Saportas and her adopted daughter were left very badly off, but they managed to keep up a decent appearance by practising the strictest economy, and by the sale, also, of certain lands which had been the "dot" of Anne's mother and aunt at their marriage. These were not parted with without long deliberation and many sorrowful regrets, but the sacrifice had to be made, as Anne's education was still in progress, she being but fifteen years old at the time of her uncle's death. She tells us how, when adversity again came upon them in

such overwhelming force, they learned to know who were their *real* friends, and how empty had been the protestations of those who had been but "the fair-weather friends" of the days of luxury and prosperity. Amongst the former they received the greatest kindness from a Madame Richard, and a Monsieur and Madame Berckhofer; the latter were apparently Dutch Huguenot refugees. Anne mentions how gratified she felt at being asked to stand godmother to the child of a mutual friend, to whom Henri, the Berckhofers' son, stood as godfather. After the death of Monsieur Saportas, his wife and niece left Orange, and went to reside again at Montpellier, Madame Saportas's native town, in order to be near the Cotton family and such faithful friends as still remained to them.

But here also trouble seemed to follow them, for they had not long settled down in Montpellier when the Comte de Grignan [1] came to invest the place, and lay siege to it, in order to subdue certain riots

[1] François Adhémar de Monteil, Comte de Grignan, Maître de Camp du Régiment de Champagne, Capitaine-Lieutenant de la Compagnie des Chevaux-Légers de la Reine Mère and Lieutenant-Général du Roi, for the provinces of Languedoc and Provence. He was born about 1628, and married firstly in 1658, Angélique Claire d'Angennes, daughter of Charles d'Angennes, Marquis de Rambouillet, and his wife, Catherine de Vivonne, Marquise de Pisani, by whom he had two daughters, Françoise Julie and Louise. This first wife died in the month of January 1665. He married, secondly, Marie Angélique du Puy du Fou, by whom he had one son, born 1667, died 1668. He married, thirdly, in 1669, Françoise Marguerite de Sévigné, daughter of Henri, Marquis de Sévigné (field marshal and governor of Fougères), and his wife, Marie de Rabutin, by whom he had Louis Provence Adhémar de Monteil de Grignan, born 1671, and two daughters, Thérèse and Pauline.—(*Trans.*)

caused by the antagonistic feeling between the Huguenot and Catholic cliques in the city, the former having razed several Catholic churches and chapels to the ground, and destroyed the adornments of the Cathedral, such as its images, carvings, altars, and windows. The Catholics had retaliated by persecutions and tortures and the infamous dragonnades, so the conflict was sore between the two opposing religious factions, and the King considered that nought but fire and sword would put a stop to these dangerous outbreaks. It was, however, but the beginning of the eight years of horror and bloodshed which culminated in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, when, driven to despair by faithless breach of promises, *half-a-million* Protestants fled their country, never to return, and settled in England, Ireland, Scotland, Switzerland, Germany and Italy, taking with them the flower of their old *noblesse*, and an army of artisans, past-masters in the arts and crafts for which France had been so long and so justly famous. Surely never has there been witnessed in the world's history a more cruel persecution (perhaps having only its parallel in the Imperial persecutions of the Christians of ancient Rome), or a more short-sighted policy than that of Louis XIV and his profligate and corrupt ministers. Montpellier suffered all the horrors of a siege, and Anne and her aunt were in the city throughout its progress. She relates how a bomb fell almost at her very feet, and after rebounding and rolling to some distance, burst, but without

causing her the slightest injury; upon which some "wise woman" prophesied that it was an omen "that she would go through appalling dangers and sorrows, but come out from them unscathed;" an easy prophecy to make, in such troublous times, as far as the *first* part of it was concerned, but certainly doubtful as to its latter portion!

In a few months' time the terrible storm blew over, and a state of comparative calm ensued, during which Montpellier resumed its normal condition of peace and gaiety, and strangers again visited it for the sake of its lovely climate and agreeable society. Madame Du Noyer describes it fully in her account of her tour in the south of France, and speaks with rapture of its numerous charms and attractions, and especially alludes to the number of English who frequented the town, the air of Montpellier being considered very efficacious in what she calls "their national complaint of consumption."

Amongst the distinguished visitors at this time was the Grand Duchess of Tuscany[1] (*née* Louise Marguerite d'Orléans), a gay, lively, clever, and rather frivolous princess, but a great favourite with all classes for her kindly heart and genial manners, and, in spite of that frivolity, respected by those more shallow than herself, for her affection and fidelity to her husband. This happy union was, however, later on marred by a separation, at first partial,

[1] The Archduchess Louise Marguerite, daughter of Gaston, Duc d'Orléans, who married Cosmo III, Grand Duke of Tuscany, on the 19th April 1661.—(*Trans.*)

but afterwards permanent, which was entirely caused by the bitter tongue and meddling interference of her husband's mother, the Dowager Grand Duchess, widow of his predecessor and uncle, Ferdinand II.

It had been considered advisable that the royal couple should separate, and the Grand Duchess Louise was now *en route* to Paris, where she subsequently resided till her death, leaving her three children under her husband's care.

The grandeur and elegance of her numerous suite, and the affability of the Grand Duchess, made a great impression on Anne, and she tells us in a naïve and amusing way how, one morning early, after breakfast, she accompanied Madame Saportas and other distinguished ladies of Montpellier to pay their respects to the Princess, and that she, Anne, being only fifteen, and not "out,"—to use a modern term,—had to wait in the ante-room whilst the reception was going on; but that one of the gentlemen of the guard, with whom she chatted in the interval, opened the door of another room, allowing her to peep in, and there she saw a sight which seems to have rather scandalised her, for she beheld, sitting on a bed, four of the Grand Duchess's maids of honour, laughing and drinking beer. This behaviour so early in the morning must have appeared quite shocking to the carefully brought-up Anne Petit, and she moralises on it in a very entertaining fashion.

The Princess, Anne says, held no *state* receptions, as she was still in deep mourning for her father-in-law; but here she must be in error, as it is an un-

doubted fact that Anne was at this time fifteen, and Ferdinand II, the Princess's father-in-law, died in 1668, which would have made Anne but five years old when she saw the Princess; it is not, besides, at all likely that the latter would have worn mourning for her father-in-law for *ten years*. There was probably some confusion of youthful memory in this portion of Anne's recollection, and the Princess must have been in mourning for some other near relative.

There is, unfortunately, in Madame Du Noyer's memoirs, and in her own, and her correspondent's letters, a total absence of all dates of the day, month, or year of any event which she mentions; for what reason, it is impossible to form any conjecture; but in those instances where dates *can* be annexed, it has been considered advisable to do so, in order, as much as possible, to give a due sequence of events. For the rest, as has been already remarked, the reader may place perfect reliance on Madame Du Noyer's accurate description of every occurrence that came under her notice.

Lulled into a false security by the seeming calm which pervaded the political world, Madame Saportas and Anne continued to live at Montpellier, quietly and happily on their reduced income, content that in the midst of so much death, torture, and misery, their lives had been preserved to them, and that they were supported by the kindness of relatives and the benevolence of old and long-tried friends. "L'Oncle Cotton," as Anne calls her aunt's eldest brother, appears to have been her guardian in

financial matters, and the relative to whom they always turned for advice in all their difficulties.

But alas! they were soon to realise that this calm was but a mere shadow, soon to vanish at the first breath of another schismatic persecution; as the poet Crabbe says:—

> "Hard is his fate, who builds his peace of mind
> On the precarious mercy of mankind."

And this fate was theirs, for Anne was hardly sixteen and a half when Montpellier again became the scene of religious disturbances, and fear of death or torture forced the aunt and niece to fly for safety to Nîmes, at this time quiet, though that city also had been the scene of horrible events during the preceding three years.

From her father Anne could expect no assistance; the heavy imposts of the hated *maltôtiers* or tax-farmers had ruined him, like the rest of the world. Bereft of nearly all his old friends, who had either died or fled from persecution, and unable to bear up against this torrent of adversity, poor old Monsieur Petit died poverty-stricken and heart-broken at the comparatively early age of sixty-three.

Anne appears to have been in constant intercourse with him during his life, although he continued to reside by himself, and never replaced the beautiful young wife whom he had fondly loved and mourned.

In her memoirs, Anne speaks in a pathetic manner of her grief at his death, but almost

with a spirit of thankfulness breathing through her deep sorrow, at the thought that he had been spared the evil to come. The years sped on till 1688, and Madame Saportas and her niece settled at Nîmes, thanks to the kindness and interest of Monsieur d'Autran, the Advocate-General of the Orange Parliament, who had aided them in their departure from Montpellier. But now, after many annual disturbances and much tyranny, the dreaded Dragonnades, with the Marquis de Rut, called the Scourge of the Huguenots, at their head, swept down upon the city, and persecution was the order of the day. None knew whether their turn might not come next; treachery reigned rampant; "a man's enemies were those of his own household;" the great war-cries of Huguenots and Catholics summoned the nation to arms, and brought misery, tyranny, and schism, in the place of happiness, unity, and tolerance.

France became a scene of unparalleled horror and bloodshed, while her sister-nations looked on in indignation and righteous wrath. To attempt to stem the torrent of persecution was useless; they could only open their arms to those more fortunate sufferers who, plundered of all they possessed, and bereft of most of those nearest and dearest to them, fled from their distracted country, and found a haven of rest in happier lands, and that religious tolerance which was denied them in their own.

During all this terrible time, the small band of devoted friends was drawn nearer together in

sympathy, affection, and intimacy; loath to part from each other, and united in tenderest friendship, that friendship in many cases (even in hearts sore with affliction) grew into love, and they riveted those bonds in firmer unity by marriage. Anne's paternal uncle, Monsieur Petit, who held some provincial appointment, married the Marquise du Quesne,[1] widow of the famous admiral of that name, whilst one of her sons (Madame Du Noyer does not say which) married a daughter of Monsieur Bosc, a Montpellier merchant. It will be hereafter seen in one of her letters that the son of this Monsieur Bosc (or *Du* Bosc, as he liked to be called) eloped from Holland with the Marquise de Monpouillan, the divorced second wife of the Marquis de Monpouillan, eldest son of the Duc de la Force.

A third marriage also took place at this time amongst this united little band. One of Madame Saportas's kindest and staunchest friends, Monsieur Moreau de Brasey, married the widowed Madame de la Primaudaye, *née* Mademoiselle de Lavallée. The families of De la Primaudaye and of Du Quesne were amongst the earliest refugees to England, and

[1] The Marquise du Quesne (*née* Mademoiselle Gabrielle de Bernières), wife of Abraham du Quesne, the celebrated Huguenot admiral, by whom she had four sons; Henri, an author, who lived privately on an estate he purchased in Switzerland; Abraham, a captain in the navy, who distinguished himself at the sieges of Toulon and Genoa; Isaac, also in the navy; and Jacob, of whose profession no record exists. Admiral Abraham du Quesne died at Paris 1688, in his seventy-eighth year, from wounds received in the bombardment of Genoa, at which he was present. This name is also spelt Du Chesne, but the family now spell it Du Cane.—(*Trans.*)

their descendants still exist and hold distinguished positions in the land of their forefathers' adoption. There was nothing left for the poor persecuted company of friends but to organise their flight from the city that had so long been their home. It required the utmost secrecy to arrange this. Madame Saportas had become a great invalid, and all the responsibility of the move devolved upon Anne, who was now nearly twenty-five years old. In conjunction with two friends, the Duchesse de Duras and Madame de Cassagne, they applied for leave to depart for England from one of the town-councillors who was friendly to the Huguenots; but he did not dare to risk his personal safety by according them this permission, and refused it point blank. Upon this Madame de Cassagne disguised herself as a servant, and after hiding for some hours in a mill, got away secretly to Rotterdam, whither Madame Saportas and Anne, disguised as a farrier's wife and daughter, followed her, and the Duchesse de Duras joined them shortly after.

It may be mentioned here, although a little out of place in point of date, that in 1685, when Anne was twenty-two, an advantageous marriage had been proposed to her by Catholic relatives of the Petit family. The proposed *fiancé* was also a Catholic, and the condition of the marriage was, that Anne should become a member of the Church of Rome. This she at first strenuously declined to do; but the marriage was a wealthy one, her aunt would be placed in comfortable circumstances for the remainder of her

life, and Anne herself would enjoy perfect immunity from all persecution and fear of death.

This entailed the abjuration of her beloved Huguenot faith. The conflict in her soul was tremendous, and she trembled with remorse and horror at the step she was asked to take. But the pressure brought to bear on her was so strong, that, divided between her affection for her relative and her duty to her God, she sacrificed the latter in order to benefit the former, and became a pervert from the faith in which she had been nurtured from her earliest youth.

But "*l'homme propose, et Dieu dispose.*" The projected marriage never took place, for the intended bridegroom was stricken with some disease and died not long before the day fixed for the ceremony. Here truly was a solution of the difficulty. It seemed as if a merciful Providence had intervened to bring back the sheep that had strayed from the fold, and to rescue one of "His chosen" from the consummation of a great sin.

Anne's remorse and her aunt's grief were her greatest punishment; she speaks of it with bitter compunction, and it must have been to her a lasting regret all her life.

However, she hastened as soon as possible to make amends for her falling away, and by her earnest petition was received again into her mother-church.

A form of recantation was drawn up by a select meeting of the pastors and *anciens*, or elders of the

Church, in which she swore solemnly, before God and the consistory, never to sin again in like manner, and to hold firmly to the faith in which she had been nurtured.

From that time she remained faithful to the religion of her youth, and neither persecution nor other tribulations ever again shook her steadfast adherence to the tenets of her Huguenot upbringing, although she once thereafter weakly made use of a subterfuge to save her life.

To return to the history of the fugitives.

The Duchesse de Duras finally contrived to escape to England, where she resided some time under the protection of her son-in-law, Lord Faversham, till peace was again re-established in France.

By interest with Dutch friends Madame Saportas and Anne were introduced to an English gentleman and lady, Mr. and Mrs. Skelton. The husband held some appointment in connection with the Houses of Parliament. They had one son, a youth of whom Anne constantly speaks in her memoirs as "Master Charles."

As these persons had the privilege of taking their return passage from Rotterdam to England in the royal yacht, which had conveyed some distinguished personage to Holland (in whose train the Skeltons had come over), they obtained the same privilege for Madame Saportas and her niece, and thus in safety and under kindly care the two unfortunate fugitives performed the journey to that land of

liberty and toleration, whose shelter was accorded to so many thousands in like dire straits.

On their arrival in London they accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Skelton to their own home, a handsome mansion in Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, as their hospitable and generous hosts would not hear of their taking lodgings. With them, therefore, they passed a few happy months in the security and peace to which they had so long been strangers.

Anne Petit's accounts of her sight-seeing in London are very amusing. Escorted by the Skeltons and their young son, she visited every object of interest in the city, and seems to have been most impressed by "Le Witeall," the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, Henry VII's chapel, and Richmond Park, and above all, by the Monument, which she styles "*une grande pyramide*" of magnificent proportions, and speaks with rapture of the splendid and extended view to be obtained from its summit over the great city and its environs. Even then, although the Monument had been erected only eleven years, it had gained a dreadful notoriety from the enormous number of suicides who had cast themselves from the top of it; and Madame Du Noyer states that shortly before her visit to it (1688) a high iron railing had been placed round the platform. This, however, although existing till 1839, did not prove effectual, and it was at last found necessary to enclose the *whole* platform in a species of iron cage before the dreadful mania for suicide from this spot could be finally checked.

Madame du Noyer moralises in her humorous style on the reason of this suicidal mania in England. She thinks it may be attributable to the *triste* and foggy climate of the country, especially of London, caused by its proximity to the river and its damps and mists, or else the too heavy diet of the people, and their self-contained manner of bearing all emotions, painful as well as pleasurable, whereas "it would be so much better for the English if they would give vent to that emotion, like the French, as it would greatly relieve the tension in their nervous system, and prevent mental reaction." As to their manner of life, she says, she found them all too fond of eating and drinking, the food being of a coarse and heavy description, and badly cooked, according to French notions of the culinary art. As to the drinking, she disapproves of the quantity of beer and chocolate consumed by English people, both high and low.

She gives a curious picture of London life in the year 1688, and it is amusing to read the comments of a foreigner upon our manners and customs, whatever may be the period of those observations. She says that the English of the upper classes took a cup of chocolate as soon as they awoke. Tea does not seem to have come into fashion until "good Queen Anne" and "her dear Mrs. Masham" (the strong-minded Duchess of Marlborough) had hob-nobbed over their Court gossip and dishes of tea.

She goes on to say that they took chocolate again at ten o'clock, with eggs and bread and rolls, but most often only accompanied by small rich cakes

of various sorts; at three, or at the latest, four o'clock, came the one meat meal of the day, which lasted two hours, and at which an extraordinary number of heavy dishes, pasties, and tarts were consumed, accompanied by home or foreign wines and tankards of ale. She speaks of the large appetites of the English, and of their "disgusting custom" of eating meat so underdone and so *saignant* that it could only be described as half raw, a habit which neither her aunt nor herself were ever able to adopt. At nine or ten o'clock at night there was another repast of chocolate, and heavy, rich cake and little rolls for the ladies, and bread and cheese and beer for the gentlemen. She gives as a reason for there being only one meal of meat during the day, the fact that in the previous year, a heavy tax had been imposed on all butchers' meat, and that consequently no households except those of the very wealthy nobility could afford to give themselves *two* meat meals *per diem*.

She also says that she thought Englishmen very noble, and good, and straightforward, but greatly wanting in small social elegancies. She considered their figures and carriage fine, but their faces ugly, and their dress not at all tasteful.

The women, she considered, were handsome and fresh-looking up to twenty-five or thirty years of age, but after that she did not admire their appearance, as she thought they aged rapidly, and became coarse and fat owing to their gross feeding and inactive habits.

After several months' pleasant sojourn under a safe and friendly roof, Madame Saportas and her niece resolved to return to France, having heard that matters were quieter there, and that many persons were also going back to resume their former life in their old homes.

With many expressions of affectionate regret, they bade adieu to the kind friends who had so generously sheltered them, and landed again in Rotterdam. Here they would have been seized as suspects, and put to death, had not those who were about to arrest her aunt and herself been informed that they were not Huguenots, but members of the sect called the "Nouveaux Catholiques," a branch of liberal Catholics who were permitted to hold their own special services when and where they pleased. It will be observed in several instances in her letters that she says "she is not a Huguenot," for from the time of her abjuration of the Catholic faith she ever after called herself a Protestant. For what reason does not appear, except perhaps that after the siege of La Rochelle the term "Huguenot" had become synonymous with "rebel."

For her weakness in saving her own and her aunt's life by "sailing under false colours" she felt such renewed remorse that she was actually tempted to commit suicide. She went to bed one night with the determination to let herself bleed to death, but, to her surprise, no bleeding attended the deep puncture she had made in her arm, although she applied pressure to bring about the wished-

for result. She adds that the sheets were so cold when she first got into bed, that she thought that she was wet through with the blood that had been flowing from the puncture, and was quite astonished when she discovered that she had not lost a drop!

Her aunt, and the friends in whose house they were staying, gave her a well-deserved lecture on the enormity of her attempt, and she was, she says, deeply repentant for her wickedness, and full of remorse for her backsliding in the paths of truth and religious loyalty. From Rotterdam, Anne and her aunt wandered about from place to place, through Holland, Germany, Guelderland, and Switzerland, whence they seem to have worked their way back to the south of France and Montpellier.

This wandering life seems to have lasted a year or two, but concerning this period Anne is rather confused as to times and seasons, in the account she gives of their journeys; she jots down incidents as they come into her mind, and not with regard to their consecutive occurrence; however, we may take it that they were thus travelling during the time specified above, which would bring Anne's age up to her twenty-ninth year, and the date to the year 1692. And now came the turning-point of her life; her early womanhood was quickly passing, and, owing to trouble and adversity, and their restless life, Anne had not since the death of her *fiancé* bestowed any thoughts on marriage, or on any life apart from her beloved aunt, to whom

she was bound by every tie of blood, gratitude, and devoted affection. She was therefore startled out of the ordinary tenor of her life when it was proposed to her by her aunt and other relatives and intimate friends that she should marry. Her aunt was doubly urgent on this matter; she felt that she was not long for this world, that her race was nearly run, and that a lingering disease and a series of overwhelming afflictions and losses were now bearing her down to the grave, and that in a few months perhaps, her beloved adopted child would be left orphaned and homeless.

It was better in all ways that Anne should marry, and she had had many admirers; she was clever, shrewd, talented and accomplished, and by no means wanting in beauty, her style being that of a piquant lively brunette, with gay and elegant manners, and the *savoir-faire* of one who had moved in the best society, and "*qui connaît son monde*"; she was good and affectionate, and gentle-hearted, and the man who would win her, would be the fortunate possessor of a most charming wife. It was decided, therefore, that Anne should marry, and it was notified to her that all her friends would be gratified if her choice fell on Monsieur Du Noyer, a gentleman of good birth and standing, and of considerable wealth. She had known him intimately for some time, and liked him extremely, and opportunity, encouragement, and propinquity, the three great aids to love, soon developed liking into love and admiration on both sides. Monsieur Du Noyer united in his person two

good appointments with rich emoluments; and besides holding the post of "*Député des États à la Cour*" (a sort of parliamentary membership), he was "*Grand Maître des Eaux et des Forêts.*" As regards his personal appearance, his wife says of him that he was very handsome, of a fine, tall, manly figure; his face was lighted up by wonderfully sparkling, brilliant eyes; his mouth was exceptionally fine and expressive; and his only defect was, that he was slightly pitted by small pox, but not enough to detract from his remarkable manly beauty. His talents seem to have been equal to his personal appearance, but as regards his *moral* character so much cannot be said.

The early years of their married life appear to have been thoroughly happy and united, and a sincere affection reigned between the husband and his young wife, who seems to have been several years his junior.

She herself says with pride, in one of her letters to her friend in Paris, that "she is old-fashioned enough to love her husband dearly, and to be proud of it," though she knows that "it is no longer in fashion." There is reason to believe that those letters were written during the early years of her married life, but though she speaks several times of her husband, she makes no mention of children. She would not later on, perhaps, have been able to accompany her husband on his professional tours of inspection in the South of France, as she states in her letters.

Who the friend was to whom these letters were written it has been impossible to discover, for both names and initials have been omitted; but that it was some one for whom she entertained a strong affection, and with whom she was on terms of the closest intimacy, there is not the slightest doubt.

Her own letters are cleverer in their style than those of her anonymous friend, although the latter is equally observant. There is a gay and witty vein about Madame Du Noyer's letters which in those of her correspondent is not so perceptible, the humour in the latter being of a more cynical and sarcastic nature; but both women were "in touch," to use a modern phrase, with all the celebrities and social and political events of their time. During these first years of happy union, Madame Du Noyer became the mother of four children, a son, whose name, curiously enough, she does not give in her memoirs, and three daughters, Anne Marguerite, Marie, and Catherine Olympe, called in her family by the pet name of Pimpette.

The succeeding years were again full of trouble; the persecution of the Huguenots had burst out afresh, and those refugees who had returned to France felt that it was no longer safe for them to stay there, and that a second flight was necessary if they wished to save their own and their children's lives.

Amongst these were the Du Noyers; other reasons also decided them in favour of a hasty flight; the revenues of the Government were in a most

depressed condition, salaries and appointments were no longer of the same value, socially or pecuniarily. The year was 1704. War, and famine in its train, with all its attendant horrors, threatened to overwhelm the country in desolation and ruin. The French had been defeated at Blenheim with great slaughter by the Allies under the Duke of Marlborough, and the streets were echoing with ribald songs against the King and his Court and his mistresses, ending with the eternal refrain of "*Malbrouck s'en va-t-en guerre.*" Besides this, the war of the Spanish Succession was raging with blind fury, the Emperor of Germany disputed the will of Carlos II which appointed Philippe, Duc d'Anjou, grandson of Louis XIV, his successor to the throne of Spain; and he overran the latter country with his semi-barbarous troops, destroying by fire and sword some of its fairest cities, and laying waste the fields and their harvests of successive seasons.

Apart from political reasons, Madame Du Noyer's private sorrows induced her to leave France; a continued sojourn in the South brought her daily an increase of grief and anxiety. She had now been married thirteen years, but her husband's whole heart and affection were no longer hers; to the boy he was still a fond and devoted father, and simply idolised and spoilt him; but for the three girls he cared little or nothing, and as for herself, he had wearied of her, although, as she herself says in most pathetic words, her affection for him had never waned.

To indifference succeeded infidelity, and then positive and declared dislike, neglect, and cruelty.

Relatives, at her request, held interviews with him, and reasoned with him on the enormity of his conduct, but his infatuation for some lady or ladies of Montpellier blinded him to his duties as a husband and father, and to all sense of manliness and loyalty.

However, what reasoning and interviews failed to do, in inducing him to break off with these disgraceful *liaisons*, fear and love of life effected. He at last awoke to the fact that if he and his family remained in the South of France, their lives would be in danger; grief and anxiety brought the erring husband and sorrowing wife together again. They packed up hastily, and travelling by rapid stages, fled from France and took refuge in Holland.

Here they settled down quietly in lodgings, meeting many old friends, who, like themselves, had fled from the evil to come.

But this state of things did not last long. Monsieur Du Noyer returned to his former scandalous life, and went from bad to worse, till his unhappy wife could no longer blind herself to the fact that his sins were past all forgiveness, and that to condone such disloyalty to herself was alike detrimental to her own dignity as wife and mother, and fatal to her children's happiness and future careers. She says plaintively, that in spite of even *this*, she still loved him, because he was so loving to their boy, and so fascinating and handsome,

and so much admired for his extraordinary talents, and for the perfect probity with which he had carried out the various duties of his post under the Government.

She adds sadly, that whereas in thirteen years of married life he had never left her for a single night, even though the last six years had not been happy ones, he now was absent from her for three, sometimes four nights a week, spending them in gambling and worse orgies, with companions of both sexes of the most degraded description, and that he would reel home in the morning hopelessly intoxicated, and treat her and the three little girls with unspeakable cruelty. Food and fire and clothing were often, if not actually wanting, stinted in quality and quantity, their health suffered, and the second girl, Marie, died from the effects of the privation, but he never allowed himself to suffer. By dint of threats, he gradually coaxed or forced his wife to part, bit by bit, with all her property, except 62,000 livres, which she had laid up in a bank unknown to him, as a "stand by for some sad day of disaster." This she dared not touch, not knowing in what dire moment she might need to withdraw it; it was better to endure pinching and privation to a certain extent rather than sacrifice *everything* to the greed of an unprincipled man. That money which he managed to force from her was spent in gambling and vicious pleasures; she acknowledges, with a sigh breathing in every word, that she was weak, but repeats again, "I still loved him dearly through all,

even in spite of this." What will not some women endure for the sake of their children, and for the old love, that takes longer to stifle and kill, than respect and esteem?

Another miserable scene took place between the unhappy Anne and her erring and faithless husband; she threatened to leave him, and to take the children with her. Life with him was now a misery and a martyrdom, which not even the love that still flickered in her heart could make endurable, unless some reform took place in *his* mode of life. Alarmed at the prospect that his money-supplies were to be stopped, and that he would thus have no means of securing to himself those unlawful pleasures which had now become a second nature to him, he consented, but with an ill-grace, to "mend his ways."

The loving and forgiving wife once more allowed herself to believe in him, and although he continued *secretly* to deceive her, *outwardly* their life seemed to present to her the happy prospect of reform and affectionate reunion.

But alas! for her, she was leaning on a broken reed, and it must be confessed that Monsieur Du Noyer proved himself to be as thorough-going a scamp as ever figured in the pages of a French novel, or any other romance in which loving, trusting wives are hoodwinked, and all the laws of the Decalogue are set at defiance. For some time past he had been carrying on a disgraceful *liaison* with a Dutch lady, notorious, even in those licentious

times, for her absolute disregard of all conventional propriety and womanly feeling. Her life was a glaring scandal, and the influence and attraction that she exercised over Monsieur Du Noyer, as well as over other men, was the more extraordinary in that she was hideously ugly and vulgar. That such a handsome, courtly man should have been enslaved by so degraded a specimen of her sex is one of those astounding anomalies which human nature so often presents, and for which there is no accounting. Madame Du Noyer naïvely hints that if the lady had been beautiful, or witty, or charming, *some* excuse might have been found for her husband, but she could lay no claim to any of these attractions, and the mystery was therefore all the more inexplicable.

For several weeks Anne thought that her husband had entirely broken with "*la guenon*," as she calls her, but one fatal night, being in better humour than was now usual with him, he invited her (Anne) to go to the opera, and for that purpose secured a box, in which, on the night fixed, they took their places. Shortly after the beginning of the performance, Madame Du Noyer suddenly observed that her husband was making stealthy signs to some one on the opposite side of the theatre; glancing quickly up, she perceived with indignation and disgust that in the box exactly opposite to them sat the Dutch woman with two or three gentlemen.

Outraged jealousy, and a furious, sudden, and ungovernable access of blind rage against her

husband and his degraded mistress caused her to forget time and place, and the respect due to herself, and to seek only how she might avenge herself then and there on her who had been at the root of all her misery. She says that, deaf to all her husband's angry remonstrances, she flew out of their own box round to the other one opposite, in which sat her hateful and hideous rival, upon whom she burst in a whirlwind of passion, and in spite of the exclamations of the gentlemen in the box and the shocked outcries of the audience, threw herself upon "*la guenon*," scratched the powder and paint off her face, and tearing off her "coiffure," gave vent to her rage by the administration of sounding slaps on her rival's bare head!

The latter, half fainting from the treatment she had received, was carried out of the box, the performance ceased, and Monsieur Du Noyer conveyed his wife home to their lodgings in a frame of mind which she justly terms "indescribable."

After so open a scandal, it was no longer possible, as may be supposed, for the husband and wife to continue to live together; a meeting of friends was called, and it was decided that a judicial separation should at last be arranged; the husband consented to this, on condition that he should be allowed to have their son under his own care, Madame Du Noyer retaining charge of the two girls. This arrangement was carried out, with many bitter pangs on the part of the unfortunate mother, who felt that the parting with her boy (whom she describes

as a loving and affectionate child), was a terrible wrench. But it seemed the only alternative, and the only way to ward off and prevent the recurrence of future misery. From the money that she had secretly saved Anne made, it appears, a certain allowance to her husband, for the benefit of himself and the boy, on condition that she should suffer no further molestation from him.

This finally settled, Monsieur Du Noyer seems to have returned to the south of France, taking their son with him, after what poor Anne describes as a parting "which broke her heart," and she adds that "she could not forget the tender love and unity which had once prevailed between them," although her unworthy husband no longer deserved either her respect or her affection.

Shortly after, Madame Du Noyer, at the instance of many old friends in England, resolved to leave Rotterdam till the "opera scandal" had quite blown over, and take up her residence for a time again in London. She took both her daughters over with her, and relates with much maternal pride, that the beauty and graceful manners of the two young girls, now about fifteen and sixteen years of age, made a great sensation amongst her old friends. She received the same kindly welcome as before, and settled herself in some lodgings that were found for her in Denmark Street, St. Giles's parish, then the headquarters of the Huguenot refugees who swelled the "noble army of religious martyrs" in this and the neighbouring parishes of St. Anne's, St. Martin's-in-the-Fields,

Saint Jean de Savoie, and of many other churches in various parts of London.

She received numerous introductions to many of the principal nobility and gentry of London from her friends in Holland—Monsieur de Fabrice, his relative, Madame de Beringhem, and her niece the Comtesse d'Aulnoy, as well as from the Dutch plenipotentiary, Monsieur d'Oudyck, and from De Ruvigny, Earl of Galway, the famous Huguenot commander. Here dates again fail us, but it is probable that she stayed in England some three or four years, returning again to Holland about the year 1716. This time she settled at the Hague, where she again met all her old friends, and received the same kindness from them as in former days, especially from Monsieur de l'Étang, a relative of Madame de Beringhem, who secured most comfortable apartments for her over a wine merchant's shop.

Here Madame Du Noyer appears to have lived happily enough. Her property in the south of France was paying a better rental, and the political horizon seemed calmer.

Nearly a year passed thus, when a terrible blow again struck her—a blow from which she never recovered. It truly seemed as if every misfortune which fate could shower on one poor suffering soul, was reserved for this sorrow-stricken, sorely-tried woman. With agonising words she cries out in her narrative, that she thinks that God has thus visited her with these trials, as a punishment for having denied His holy faith. She adds that but for the consoling

kindness and gentle comfort of the pasteur of the Walloon Church at the Hague she must have sunk, body and soul, under this last most cruel wound.

Under guise of loyal friendship to herself and unrestrained intimacy, as between mother and son, Voltaire, then a youth of about nineteen, and attached as page to the suite of the Marquis de Châteauneuf, ambassador from France to Holland, fell in love with, and wooed her youngest surviving daughter (Catherine Olympe), her darling Pimpette, and taking a cruel and unprincipled advantage of the young and trusting girl, seduced her, and thus brought bitter sorrow and misery upon the family which had received him with such kindness.

It will ever be a foul blot on the reputation of Voltaire, that he thus betrayed the trust and friendship of those from whom he had received never-failing hospitality. His conduct was reported to the King, who at once ordered him to return to Paris. He was ignominiously expelled from the ambassador's house and sent home to his father; but Monsieur Arouet de Voltaire (notary and treasurer of the Chambre des Comptes) refused to receive him back. He was, however, befriended, although he did not deserve it, by Monsieur de Caumartin, an old friend of the elder Voltaire, and by him taken to the country-house of his father, Monsieur de Caumartin, senior. Here he was kept under judicious control for a time, and forced to lead a regular and respectable life; and here also, under his benevolent protector's influence, was induced to take up

that literary career in which he afterwards so greatly distinguished himself, although old Monsieur de Voltaire had, from the first, always discountenanced his son from following the unmistakable bent of his genius for literature and poetry.

From this time forth, young Arouet de Voltaire passes out of the scene of Madame Du Noyer's life, and we have no more to do with him in these pages. But what he was as a youth—cynical, corrupt, vicious, and irreligious—so he remained in his manhood and advanced age. His character has been admirably summed up by A'Beckett in these words: "The physiognomy of Voltaire was indicative of his disposition. It is said to have partaken of the eagle and the monkey; and to the fire and rapidity of the former animal he united the mischievous propensities of the latter. With strong perceptions of moral excellence and elevation, he was little and mean in conduct, a victim to petty passions and caprices. Never at rest, either in mind or body, never tranquil or sedate . . . his tastes of life were vitiated and his manners corrupt. . . . He was habitually avaricious, though he performed some generous acts, which, however, *he took care to make known.* He was too selfish to inspire love, and too capricious to merit esteem. He had numerous admirers, but probably not one friend." What a picture! It is not surprising that a man with such elements of character dormant in his disposition, should have proved so treacherous to the woman who had always treated him with open-hearted kindliness.

After this terrible episode in her life, poor Madame Du Noyer never held up her head again. From henceforth she felt that life had lost all its charms for her. Not even the consolations of sympathising friends could assuage the sorrow which had come upon her.

From the day of the cruel deed, the poor girl Olympe seems to have sunk into a decline. She gradually wasted away, the warning symptoms of consumption set in, and in little more than a year the pretty Pimpette died.

Even during poor Olympe's last illness there were not wanting cruel gossiping tongues to spread about evil reports concerning Madame Du Noyer and her two daughters. One lady went so far as to tell her (with that so-called "love of truth" which prevails so much among uncharitable retailers of gossip) that people were scandalised that any "good Huguenot" should permit her daughters to sing airs from operas, or to dance, both girls having been very fond of these innocent amusements. Another lady called to express her horror at hearing that she (Madame Du Noyer) made her daughters recite portions from plays; whilst a third still more officious lady declared that the neighbours were quite scandalised at the extravagant quantity of sugar which Mademoiselle Anne Du Noyer put in her coffee! She relates all these annoyances with a flash of her old humour showing itself through the bitterness of her contempt and grief. Fortunate was it for her that she was so often able to see

the ludicrous aspect of an incident, and the bright side of a trouble.

After Olympe's death, she merely mentions small occurrences referring to her friends till about the close of the year 1719, when she says that she was suffering from an overpowering depression which nothing could shake off or dissipate, although her only remaining daughter was the greatest solace and comfort to her, by her goodness, beauty, accomplishments, and gentle, tender affection. Some people, she says, would have looked upon this depression as a presentiment of more evil to come, and would also have placed an incident that occurred at that time under the same category, but "I," she adds, "am not superstitious, and do not think that events are foreshadowed by accidental mishaps." She goes on to say that one windy afternoon, when her bed-room was growing rather dark, a large mirror was unhooked from the wall, and placed in a leaning position against the casement of the window, in order that she might see to dress with greater ease.

A few minutes afterwards, a tremendous gust of wind burst the window open, as a storm broke over the house, and the mirror fell crashing to the floor, and broke into a thousand pieces; "the result being," she says, "that I had to pay three pistoles, which I could ill afford!"

The next day, as if to bear out the popular proverb which declares that "a shattered mirror portends misfortune," Monsieur Du Noyer, after long

years of silence and separation, again appeared on the scene, before the eyes of his astonished wife.

She was dumbfounded and would have bid him begone, but the old fascination prevailed; he threw himself on her pity and on the remembrance of their old love, and besought her to aid him in the dire distress that he swore had come upon him from no fault of his own.

She listened to him. Some, perhaps all, will say that she was weak, but the urgent need of money for her boy's future career was again thrown in as an additional weight to the influence that was brought to bear on her by the unprincipled man who, for his own selfish ends, had returned to work upon his wife's noble and outraged heart.

He swore again that it was *not* gambling, but misfortune in speculations which had brought him to such straits of poverty; she actually believed him, even after all that had gone before! And when he went on to say that the old landed property of the Cotton family was again in the market and could be acquired for a certain sum, that it might be theirs now, and that they could settle down there, peaceably and happily all together, if she would only forgive him, the sorrowing broken-hearted woman consented to all his suggestions.

She commuted her pension, and gathering together all but a few thousand livres of her remaining carefully-saved little fortune, placed in his hands 62,000 livres in notes, and bade him go south once more and complete the arrangements he had sug-

gested; she asked him as a favour to leave her boy with her during his absence, till he should send for them; he had now grown into a charming youth, and retained all his old affection and tenderness for his mother; a fact, but a surprising one, with such a father.

However, Monsieur Du Noyer, by dint of many plausible excuses, succeeded in persuading her that it would better if the boy went south with him, and that she and their daughter Anne should follow as soon as all preparations were complete in their new home.

With reluctance and a painful presentiment of evil, poor Madame Du Noyer consented to this also. But—Monsieur Du Noyer never went south, and apparently, from what may be gathered from the last hastily-concluded pages of her narrative, she never saw or heard of either husband or son again, from the day on which she parted from them at the Hague, with every hope of a speedy reunion under happier auspices.

What became of Monsieur Du Noyer I have been quite unable to discover, nor have I been successful in tracing any history of the future years of their daughter Anne, and of their son. They have vanished into the shades of oblivion, and history leaves no record of their lives on her pages. Perhaps chance may some day reveal in what manner, and where, these two young persons ended lives begun in such terrible and troubled times.

Of Madame Du Noyer's last days the record is equally bare; as far as can be gathered from vague

allusions in contemporary memoirs she went to Paris after this final blow, namely in the following year, 1720, and there died at the age of fifty-eight, comparatively young in years, but old in the knowledge of the sorrows and woes of the world, in whose social and political history she had in company with many other human units played such a moving part.

Few have written such a sad history of their lives, few have borne their adversities with such an uncomplaining spirit. Her faults were doubtless many, whose are not? if there be coarseness in her writings, let us remember that it was the fault of the times in which she lived when "a spade was called a spade," and neither men nor women were thought the worse for so calling it. Her character is revealed to us in her memoirs and in her letters, which show that she was essentially kindly and womanly, and full of shrewd perception and common sense. Let us take her as we find her, and if the readers of this sketch and of Madame Du Noyer's correspondence feel the same interest in them as they have afforded to her translator, the task of the latter will have met with ample reward.

FLORENCE L. LAYARD.

LONDON, 11*th October* 1889.

THE CORRESPONDENCE

OF

MADAME DU NOYER

TRANSLATED AND EDITED

BY

FLORENCE L. LAYARD

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THE CORRESPONDENCE

OF

MADAME DU NOYER

LETTER I

FROM MADAME DU NOYER TO HER FRIEND

Description of Avignon—Raymond, Comte de Toulouse—Joanna, Queen of Naples—Robert, King of Sicily—Clement V and Gregory XI, Popes of Avignon — Situation of the City — Residences of Monsieur de Mont-Réal, Monsieur de Grillon, and the Marquis des Essarts—Convents—Signor Delfini, the Vice-Legate—Card parties—Society—The Chevalier de B——— —The Marquise d'Urban—The Marquise de Ganges—The Duc de Villars—Madame de Fortia—The Marquis de Sassenage—Madame de Castres—The Marquis d'Aubignan—Monsieur de Blauvac—The Marquise de Véléron—Cardinal de Jansson—The pleasant life and hospitality of Avignon—The Fountain of Vaucluse—Petrarch and Laura—The Tomb of Laura—Epitaph by Francis I—Abbey of the Celestine Monks—St. Benezet—St. Pierre de Luxembourg—The Bridge of Avignon—Miracles —The Tour de Trouillas — Death of a Child — Miraculous Revival.

AVIGNON.

MADAME,—You are very much mistaken, if you think that there are no amusements to be found

outside Paris; you fall into the same error as did the ancient Greeks, who considered every nation but themselves as barbarians; I can assure you that there are some very civilised people in the countries through which I have travelled since I last saw you, and I do not think that there is a more agreeable place in the world for a residence than Avignon,[1] where my husband's affairs will detain us for some time.

This ancient town, which was in olden days

[1] Avignon (the ancient Avenio, 365 miles S.S.E. of Paris). This ancient city is seated in a beautiful valley on the left bank of the Rhône. The adjacent territory, the Venaissin country, "a populous and fertile spot," was ceded to the Papacy by Philip III in 1273; and the sovereignty of Avignon was sold to Clement VI for 80,000 gold florins of Florence, by Jane, Queen of Naples and Countess of Provence, in 1348. Clement V, elected through the influence of Philip IV of France, removed the papal chair to Avignon, 1309. The following popes remained here under French influence:—

A.D. 1309, Clement V, 1314. See vacant two years, 1316; John XVI or XXII, 1334; Benedict XI or XII, 1342; Clement VI, 1352; Innocent VI, 1362; Urban V, 1370; Gregory XI, 1378; commencement of schism of the West. Two popes elected—Clement VII at Avignon, 1394, Benedict XIII.

Urban V went to Rome for a short time, but returned to Avignon; and Gregory XI is said to have meditated flight when surprised by death. In the schism called "the great schism of the West," occasioned on the election of his (Gregory's) successor in 1378, the anti-pope Clement VII took up his residence here, and was succeeded by Benedict XIII. The popes at Rome, however, triumphed, and Avignon was deprived of its rival pontiffs (1409). The French kings seized this city on various occasions. The annexation of the Venaissin and Avignon to France by the Revolutionary Government, September 14, 1791, was their first act of aggression. By the treaty of Tolentino, February 19, 1797, Pius VI formally ceded these possessions to France. Avignon was made a bishopric in the first century, and was erected into an archbishopric in 1475. By the concordat of 1801 it ceased to be a metropolis, but the privilege was restored in 1821. Councils were held at Avignon in 1080, 1209, 1270, 1279, 1282, 1326, 1327, and 1457. —(Townsend's *Manual of Dates*, pp. 84, 85.)

called *Avenio*, belonged to the Comtes de Toulouse; the Pope wrested it from Raymond during the Albigensian[1] wars, and Joanna,[2] Queen of Naples,

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[1] Albigenses.—Of these early reformers, who opposed the Church of Rome, the Paulicians, who sprang up in the seventh century, appear, as Faber states, to have been the "theological ancestors." The Paulicians, wearied by persecution, quitted Asia and sought refuge in Europe, some of them settling in the south of France. In Italy they were called Paterini and Cathari, and in France, Albigenses, from the town Albi, where they dwelt in great numbers. The term was, however, applied to other sects. The first congregation of the Albigenses is said to have been discovered at Orleans in 1017; and they began to attract the notice of the dominant church before the end of the eleventh century. They were condemned by a council in 1163. About the year 1200 the Albigenses and other anti-Roman sects which were loosely included under the same denomination had become so numerous that they were in possession of Toulouse and eighteen of the principal towns in Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphiné, which then constituted an independent sovereignty under Raymond VI (Count of Toulouse, born 1156, died August 1222). A crusade was proclaimed against him and his subjects by Pope Innocent III (1207 and 1208; Innocent III, born 1161, died July 16, 1216), and an army of five hundred thousand men was led against them by Simon of Montfort, Earl of Leicester, in 1209 (born 1150, killed June 25, 1218). A merciless war was waged for four years, until Pedro of Aragon (Pedro II, born 1174, reigned 1196-1213, killed September 12 or 17, 1213), Raymond's kinsman, was killed in battle . . . and the power of Montfort was supreme. He was slain in an insurrection at Toulouse. The war was renewed, but with little success, until in 1225 Louis VIII (surnamed *Le Lion*, born 1187, died November 8, 1226) took the cross and marched into Languedoc. He died in a few months, but the war was continued in the name of the young king, Louis IX (surnamed *Le Saint*, born 1215, died August 25, 1270). In April 1229 Raymond VII (son of Raymond VI, and last Comte de Toulouse, born 1197, died September 27, 1249) abdicated, and was brought to Paris and scourged by the priests in the church of Notre Dame. In the beginning of the crusade against the Albigenses, the tribunal of the Inquisition was first opened about the year 1210. The Albigenses were condemned by several councils.—(Townsend's *Manual of Dates*, p. 26.)

[2] Joanna I., Queen of Naples, born 1326, reigned 1343-82, eldest daughter of Carlo, Duke of Calabria, son of Roberto, King of Naples. Joanna married first, her cousin, Andreas, second son of Karl, King of Hungary. On the death of King Roberto in 1343, Joanna was pro-

and Comtesse de Provence, daughter of Robert, King of Sicily, confirmed him in his rights, and also

claimed queen. Joanna was dissolute and indecorous in her morals and manners, but possessed of many generous qualities, and was highly talented and accomplished, and a great friend to literature and the arts. Andreas, her consort, was murdered in 1345, and it was strongly suspected that she was privy to the deed, although it was never proved against her. Before the birth of her posthumous child by her first husband, Joanna, with shocking haste, hurried on her second marriage with her cousin Luigi, Prince of Tarento, with whom she had already been suspected of an intrigue. Shortly after this marriage, Naples being invaded by the King of Hungary, Joanna fled to Provence, of which she was Countess in her own right, and Carlo, Duke of Durazzo, husband of her sister Maria, was assassinated by the order of the invading monarch. She resided at Avignon for some time, but re-entered her kingdom in triumph in 1348. Shortly after, she was tried for witchcraft against her husband, before the pontifical court, but acquitted, and merely accused of "having been too fascinating to him!" This was followed by the consecration and coronation of herself and Luigi, but the latter died in 1362 of disease brought on by his dissolute life and depravity. In the next year Joanna was married thirdly to James of Aragon, styled the Infante of Majorca. She became a widow again in 1375, but her ardent disposition making single life irksome, she entered into a fourth alliance, this time with Otto, a Prince of the House of Brunswick, one of the handsomest men and bravest soldiers of his day, whom she created Duke of Tarento. Meanwhile Margarita, the daughter of her widowed sister Maria, Duchess of Durazzo, had married her cousin, the second duke of that name, and the latter, also named Carlo, disgusted with the queen's immorality and low intrigues, resolved to depose her. This he carried out, armed besides with a sentence of excommunication from Pope Urbanus VI. Joanna was imprisoned in a fortress on a point of land jutting out from Naples on to the bay, and which still exists in gloomy strength, and is called after her name. Her husband endeavoured to rescue her, but the plot failed, and after some months' imprisonment, this extraordinary woman, whose history is more like a romance than actual life, closed her varied and stormy career in the ignominy of a violent death. She was beheaded, and her body exposed to public gaze for the space of seven days. This event took place on the 22d of May 1382, in the fifty-sixth year of her age, and the thirty-ninth of her reign. She is said, by contemporary chroniclers, to have been a woman of extraordinary fascination, possessing great beauty and a splendid and commanding figure. She died without issue, her only child, by Andreas, having died as an infant.—(*Trans.*)

bestowed on him the Countship of Venaissin, of which she was Capitale.[1]

It was a papal seat for seventy years, from the time of Clement V[2] to that of Gregory XI,[3] who was the seventh Pope of Avignon, and who disputed the apostolic succession with the Popes of Rome. The situation of this city is enchanting, gardens and meadows surround its walls, which are bathed by the Rhône, and within its interior are magnificent buildings. The houses of Monsieur de Mont-Réal[4] and of Monsieur de Grillon are amongst the finest of those that meet the eye. In the former there is a picture gallery, in which the best painters in Rome have represented the adventures of the Romance of Cariclée; connoisseurs maintain that there are not finer pictures to be seen at Versailles.

Monsieur de Grillon's house is rather modern in its style, but the Marquis des Essarts,[5] with whom

[1] Capitale.—An ancient French title equivalent to lieutenant-governor, and generally bestowed in conjunction with the territorial title of a province.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Clement V, pope 1305-1314, born 1264, died April 20, 1314, by birth a Gascon, and under his secular title the Seigneur Bertrand de Got, son of the Seigneur de Vallandrau, in the diocese of Bordeaux, and an English subject. He was founder of the university of Perugia. —(*Trans.*)

[3] Gregory XI, pope 1370-1378, son of the Comte de Beaufort, and nephew of Pope Clement VI (who was born 1329, died March 27, 1378). He was also Prior of Angers, Archdeacon of Sens, Dean of Bayeux, and Canon of Paris.—(*Trans.*)

[4] Montréal.—A small town of France in the department of Aude, eleven miles west of Carcassonne; it stands on a height and has a fine church.—(*Trans.*)

[5] Essards, or Essarts, from which the title was taken, is a small town of France, in the department of La Vendée.—(*Trans.*)

you are acquainted, has just built one that quite excels the other two in beauty, as well as in novelty.

Convents for men and women add still further to the beauty of this charming city, which enjoys one of the finest climates, and one of the gentlest administrations in the world; here they only acknowledge Papal authority in the person of a vice-legate,[1] who is always a man of rank, and very amenable!

The present one is named Delfini, he is a very courteous Venetian nobleman, who occupies this post whilst awaiting that of nuncio[2] to France, and a cardinal's hat, dignities to which that of vice-legate is usually the stepping-stone.

Imposts[3] and the poll-tax[4] are unknown here, every one is well off, and every one is very gay. The ladies are coquettish, and the gentlemen make a brave show; card-playing, which one may consider as the universal amusement here, is carried on to a great extent.

Besides quiet little parties at *Ombre*,[5] there are

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[1] Vice-legate and legate were the terms applied during the Middle Ages to such distinguished ecclesiastics, generally cardinals, whom the Popes commissioned as their ambassadors to Catholic countries and cities. Nuncios were ambassadors of high ecclesiastical rank, sent by the Pope, but were not cardinals.—(*Trans.*)

[2] *See* Legate.

[3] Taxes received by a reigning sovereign on any merchandise imported into his country.—(*Trans.*)

[4] Capitation or poll-tax, levied on every subject of a kingdom.

[5] Ombre.—A game of cards played generally by three, and sometimes by five persons.—(*Trans.*)

also *Basset*[1] and *Lansquenet*[2] in all the best houses, where society of both sexes assembles every afternoon. Many beautiful and elegantly dressed ladies may be seen there, some playing at *Lansquenet*, others "punting" at *Basset*, whilst others again recline gracefully upon sofas, and interchange pleasant converse with dashing dandies. There are always a number of strangers here at Avignon as well as residents, attracted at first by curiosity, and induced to remain by its charms.

The Chevalier de B—— cannot tear himself away, so he says to the Marquise d'Urban, daughter of that unfortunate Marquise de Ganges of whose tragic death you have no doubt heard.

This lady is very charming, but people are afraid that her pride in having entangled a prince in her wiles will rather damage her reputation, which has hitherto never been tampered with, but which is now in very dangerous hands, for, as you know, the Chevalier de B—— is a great scandal-monger: however that is *her* business!

The Duc de Villars[3] has been here for some

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[1] "Basset.—This game of cards is said to have been invented by a noble Venetian in the fifteenth century, and was introduced into France in 1674. The courtiers of James II are, in an account dated February 6, 1685, represented as playing at Basset on the day of his proclamation. It was played at the court of Louis XIV until that monarch lost a large sum by means of false cards, whereupon he ordered that persons found playing Basset should be fined 1000 livres." —(Townsend's *Manual of Dates*.)

[2] Lansquenet, a game of cards. The name is derived from the old German foot-soldiers who carried lances, viz. lanzknecht.—(*Trans.*)

[3] Louis Hector, Duc de Villars, son of Pierre, Marquis de Villars, born at Moulins-en-Bourbonnais, 1653; Maréchal of France. Vic-

time, he is very much in love with Madame de Fortia, a sister of the Marquis de Sassenage, whom we met at the Palais Royal.

This lady is very noble-looking, but very haughty; your friend the Marquis des Essarts has a sister named Madame de Castres who is much more amiable, and who would be one of the most beautiful women in this province, had she not a rival in her lovely daughter (the young widow of the Marquis d'Aubignan), who has lately re-married; her husband is a son of Monsieur de Blauvac. However, I think there are some people who would decide in favour of the mother.

The Marquise de Véléron, a sister of the Cardinal de Jansson, has five or six daughters, who are all countesses or marchionesses. In short, there are shoals of women of rank here; passions run strong, and the most serious business in the place is trying how to be agreeable: love is never malicious here, jealousy and despair are unknown; the husbands are very indulgent for that matter, and permit their wives to enjoy the same liberty as they take themselves!

You may imagine, madame, that in a country which might be called the *Island of Cytherea*, where the laughter and amusements that the misery of

torious in the battles of Maestricht, Senef, Ryswick, Hochstedt, Denay, Douay, Quesnoy, Pizzighettone, etc. He was governor of Provence, a grandee of Spain, knight of the Golden Fleece, a member of the Royal Council and also of the French Academy. He died at Turin on the 17th of June 1734, aged eighty-one.—(*Trans.*)

these times have banished from France are still to be found, where one lives luxuriously and drinks Hermitage and Cante-Perdrix (which one might call the nectar of the gods, as it is the kind that is sent to Rome for the table of the Holy Father); you may imagine, I say, that it is impossible that I should feel bored in such a delightful place, especially when with one whom I love; for you know that I am sufficiently candid to acknowledge that I love my husband, although this is regarded in Paris as an old-fashioned failing, which the morals of the present century have corrected. All the same, be this a failing, or be it a virtue, it is a fact!

You need not bestow so much pity on me again, as I have no vexations except those caused by my separation from yourself; I trust, however, that you bear this with fortitude, and that you think of me nevertheless at the opera or at the theatre, or at your numerous parties; if so, I shall be delighted, for I cannot bear a friendship that is as tyrannical as hatred!

Amuse yourself, therefore, as much as you like in my absence, and I shall do the same, until such time as we shall again be able to share our pleasures conjointly: I should like to do this last in this place, where one enjoys such perfect liberty, where one can sing "*Maintenon and Noailles*" without fear of the Bastille, and where I can sit and write at my window, whilst you, perhaps, at this very moment, are shivering with cold. Were you here, I should take

you to the celebrated fountain of Vaucluse,[1] of which Petrarch[2] sang, and I would show you the tomb of the fair Laura, the famous poet's lady-love. Her monument is in the church of the Cordelier Friars;[3] on it may be read the verses[4] that King François I. caused to be graven in gold in honour of this

[1] "Vaucluse, so called *quasi Vallis Clausa*, is a fountain in the valleys of the country Venaissin, at a league's distance from the territory of Gordes in Provence. It runs out of a very great cavern, as deep as any well, at the foot of a mountain, round which is a great number of lesser ones, which furnish so much water that it forms the river formerly Salga, but now called Sorgues, which made Petrarch call it "the Queen of Fountains." It nourishes a great number of trout, crab, and other fish, and is become very famous, because Francesco Petrarch resided near it when he writ his works about 1300."—(Jeremy Collier, *Hist. Dict.*)

[2] Francesco Petrarca, poet, born 1304, at Arezzo in Tuscany, died at his villa at Arqua, near Padua, on the 18th of July 1374, of an epileptic, or, as some say, an apoplectic fit—he was found dead in his library with his head resting on the book he had been reading. He was the son of a notary in Florence, who in company with his wife and two sons, Francesco and Gherardo, was banished for political reasons from his native city in the year 1302, at the same time as Dante. The family took up their residence at Avignon, and brought Francesco up as a lawyer; but he left this profession, and became with his brother, a non-tonsured clerical; but this life he also gave up, being addicted, unfortunately, to an irregular and dissolute mode of living, whereby the lustre of his wonderful genius was greatly tarnished. It has never been known for certain who was the Laura of his poems, but many have supposed (if she were not a mythical person), that she was the daughter of Audebert de Noves, syndic of Avignon, and wife of Hugues, son of Paul de Sade; but no suspicion of any criminal passion rests on the reputation of this beautiful lady, if she were in truth the object of the poet's love, for he seems to have "adored her from afar," and even travelled to distant lands to conquer his hopeless attachment. He was never married, but left two natural sons.—(*Trans.*)

[3] Cordelier Friars.—This was an inferior order of Franciscan or Gray Friars, established by St. Francesco of Assisi in 1223, under the patronage of Pope Honorius III.—(*Trans.*)

[4] Laura de Sade, the supposed object of Petrarch's adoration, was born June 4, 1314, and is said to have died in 1348, on the same hour

heroine. I think that better verses might have been made for it by Marot; but, of course, poetry written by a king is always good!

We could go also to the Abbey of the Celestin Monks,[1] where repose the bodies of St. Benezet[2] and St. Pierre de Luxembourg. The former, by divine inspiration, built the bridge of Avignon, and was discovered in perfect preservation, buried under one

and day in the same month as Petrarch first fell in love with her. King Francis composed the following epitaph, which is mentioned by Madame Du Noyer:—

> "En petit lieu compris vous pouvez voir,
> Ce qui comprend beaucoup par renommée,
> Plume, labeur, la langue et le devoir,
> Furent vaincus par l'aimant de l'aimée,
> O Gentille Ame, étant tant estimée,
> Qui te pourra louer, qu'en se taisant?
> Car la parole est toujours reprimée
> Quand le sujet surmonte le disant."—(*Trans.*)

[1] The order of the Celestine monks was founded in 1244, by Pope Celestin V. He was born 1215, at Isernia in Abruzzo, and was known (before ascending the pontifical throne), as Pietro of Mourrhon or Monte Murrone. He became a hermit at the age of fifteen, and, after some years, went to Rome, and joined the order of St. Benet or Benezet. He died in prison, in the castle of Fumon, where he had been confined by Pope Boniface VIII for political reasons. He was Pope for only one year, 1294-1296, and died May 19, 1296.—(*Trans.*)

[2] "St. Benezet was a young shepherd, a native of Alvilar, in Vivareto; he came by divine inspiration (say the Papists) to Avignon, and there caused a bridge to be built upon the Rhone in 1177. Thus, being but twelve years of age, he published the cause of his being sent; and to confirm the truth of his mission, did himself carry a great stone which thirty men could scarcely move, and laid it at the foundation of the first pile of the bridge. This young architect built afterwards an hospital, where he instituted religious men, named "*Les Frères du Pont*," amongst whom he retired himself, and died there in 1195, and was interred in a chapel which is on the third arch of this bridge, on Avignon side. This was the cause that several other bridges were built upon the Rhone, where still the people had very much difficulty to pass over, because of the violent swiftness of this river."—(Jeremy Collier, *Hist. Dict.*)

of the arches of the aforesaid bridge, when it was cracked in a frost! The latter (saint) was a cardinal during the time of the papal schism, and was attached to the Pope at that time in authority at Avignon; after his death he became famous for the great number of miracles he performed; the most astonishing was the resuscitation of a little boy who had climbed up one of the towers[1] of His Holiness's palace, called the Tour de Trouïllas, in order to hunt for birds' nests; he fell from top to bottom, and was reduced to a "pulp"! His mother, without wasting time in screams and lamentations, gathered up her child's mutilated remains, put them in a sack, and carried them away and placed them on the saint's tomb. Whilst she was praying she saw the sack heaving, and out came the child, who asked, "Where was his sparrow?" There is the story for you, just as I read it, written up in full, in the church of the Celestin Monks; I give it to you exactly as I found it, and to tell you frankly, I think we may be saved even if we do not believe in it! Thus, after having satisfied your devotional feelings, as well as your curiosity, I should think about giving you some refreshment; on ordinary days we can always get red partridges or ortolans, and on fast days I should

[1] The Tour de Trouïllas was built by John XXII, Pope at Avignon 1316. He was a son of a native of Cahors, in Querci, named Arnaude de Ossa, a poor shoemaker. He was a man of great talents and wit, and built many splendid edifices in Avignon, and died on the 4th of December 1334, aged ninety, leaving property to the amount of twenty-eight millions of ducats, and seventeen hundred thousand florins of gold.—(*Trans.*)

give you a *fricassée* of prawns or some delicious sturgeon. The latter is a fish we do not see in Paris, but there is plenty of it here; it is larger than a salmon, and I never in my life tasted anything better. I wish all the aforesaid things could induce you to come here, for I do not at present see any chance of being able to return to Paris; pray write and tell me all the news you can, in exchange for my provincial gossip.—I remain, etc., etc.

LETTER II

REPLY FROM HER FRIEND

The Princesse de Turenne—The Duc de Ventadour—The Chevalier de B———His flirtations—Duchesse de Ventadour—The Prince de Rohan, son of the Prince de Soubise—The Chevalier de B——'s pun on the King—Madame d'Urban—The Marquis de Ganges—His marriage—The Marquis de Sassenage—The Marquis de Castres—Madame de Maintenon—Court amusements—Monseigneur the Dauphin—The Princesse de Conti—The Dauphine—Her drunkenness and gluttonous habits—Her poetical talent and sarcastic sayings—The Marquis de Lassé—King James II of England—His life at Saint-Germain—His son—His Queen—Their trials—Porte Saint-Bernard, the fashionable bathing resort—The notorious sisters Loison—The Duc d'Orléans—The actress La Raisin—The Marquise de Roure—The Comte d'Estrades—La Florence, ballet-dancer—Her intrigues with the Duc de Chartres—Philippe, Duc de Vendôme, Grand Prieur, and his *liaison* with the actress Fanchon Moreau—The Duc de Valentinois and his *liaison* with the opera-dancer, Mademoiselle du Fort—The Corruption of the Court.

PARIS.

MADAME,—Your letter gave me genuine pleasure; I admire the naïve way in which you confess that the absence of your friends is not insupportable to you, and I admire also your equanimity, although I cannot imitate it. Do not imagine, however, that I quite believe in it! I have not given up amusements,

but I am quite sure that I do not enjoy them half so much when I do not share them with you; if I were only my own mistress, I would go with all my heart to Avignon, just to show you that *I* know best how to love, even if I yield to you on all other points!

I should like very much to see the Fountain of Vaucluse, and the tomb of the lovely Laura, and your fasts and feast-days would suit me very well; but as for your miracle-working saints, I should not be taken in by them, and I would much rather go to the entertainments you mentioned, and enjoy a punt at *Basset*, or take my place on a sofa in company with other fair idlers. As far as I can judge, you are passing a very enjoyable time in the place where you are staying, with all your luxurious living, your gambling, and your love-making. I might say like Columbine, "*C'est tout comme içi!*" With such accommodating husbands and such easy-going ladies I may again repeat, "*c'est tout comme içi.*"

It also appears to me that the Chevalier de B—— is trying to console himself for the disgrace into which he has fallen: you know that the Princesse de Turenne, his sister-in-law, the only daughter of the Duc de Ventadour, brought immense wealth into the B—— family, which they are now obliged to restore to her, as she has had no children.

To avoid this complication the Chevalier de B—— took it into his head to make love to his sister-in-law; she is young and beautiful, and the only defect she possesses is, that she is lame. The

Chevalier is very handsome, he can visit her at any hour of the day without shocking social propriety, and has in fact played his cards so well, that he has induced her to declare openly that she loves him, and that she intends to marry him, and also that it is quite a love-match. The Cardinal de B——, who possesses great influence at the Vatican, felt certain of obtaining a dispensation for this marriage, such as is accorded in similar cases to sovereigns, and because the male members of his family claim the same as their right.

Madame de Ventadour offered no opposition to the affair, but the little Duc de Ventadour, who was absent enjoying himself at Vivarets, left it as soon as ever he got wind of the transaction, and arrived in Paris in a fury, determined either to break it off or to fight the Chevalier.

No sooner had he arrived in Paris than he took possession of his daughter, and carried her off to his own mansion, where he kept a watch upon her until he had married her to the Prince de Rohan, son of the Prince de Soubise.

This nobleman was a very handsome man; he had formerly been a monk, but by the death of his brother he became the heir of his house. He did not show much tact in the affair with the Chevalier; for apparently, he merely said just what was enough to silence him on the question.

However this may be, the marriage came oft to the great satisfaction of all parties, and was much hurried on.

The Duc de Ventadour showed on this occasion a great deal more firmness than was expected of him, and the Chevalier, who has been cut by everybody, has gone off to bury his woes in the country, although his vanity has suffered more than his affections, for there is no man in the world less capable of an attachment than he is. He is handsome and has a very good figure, but no virtuous woman would consider it an honour to be admired by him. Whatever you may say about Avignon, it seems to me that Princes must be very rare there if there, is such a fuss made about the Chevalier de B——, and if a woman of rank prides herself on having captivated him.

I should think she would regret her bargain, and I pity her for having been so indiscreet as to place herself at the mercy of one who is the most depraved of his sex. I hope we are rid of him for some time to come! He is neither liked nor respected at Court, and he has slandered the King so disgracefully, that I wonder that his presence is suffered there. One day some one told him that the King was very angry at his conduct, and bore him a grudge for it (*lui gardoit une dans de lait*). "*Hélas!*" replied the Chevalier, "*je suis bien malheureux, que la seule dent qui lui reste, encore est-elle pourrie, lui soit demeurée pour me mordre.*" [1]

You may judge by this, that one cannot expect

[1] A punning answer on the proverb, and the words *dans* and *dent*; only possible in French, and which would lose its point if translated. —(*Trans.*)

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any discretion from a man of that sort; no woman is safe with such a man as he is. I am dying with impatience to hear how Madame d'Urban will manage to rid herself of him; for I am interested in all that concerns her, although I have never seen her, and I was greatly touched by the story you once told me of her mother's tragic death, and cannot help feeling sympathy for the children of that beautiful and unfortunate creature.

I know she left two, for we have had her son over here, who is called the Marquis de Ganges, and who is colonel of a regiment of dragoons; he is extremely handsome. I hear that the Marquis made a very good match in his own province, and that Madame d'Urban, his sister, is a lovely woman; but that is all I can tell you. Do tell me, I beg of you, all *you* know, for I should like to hear about a family in whom I take so much interest.

You allude only very casually to the sister of the Marquis de Sassenage, and I am astonished that you say nothing about the sister of the Marquis de Castres, who is married to a man of rank and wealth at Avignon. Tell me also something more about the ladies there, and about their amusements and intrigues; there are such common creatures here now, and there is not even any refreshing Court gossip!

Madame de Maintenon, hunting, and excursions to Marly, are the only amusements the King enjoys.

Monseigneur[1] and the Princesse de Conti keep to themselves; the Dauphine is a glutton, but wine is inspiration to her, and when she has imbibed a little too freely, she composes the prettiest poetry in the world, in which she spares no one, not even the King her dear papa, nor the little Duke her husband; most especially does she launch out against that unfortunate Marquis de Lassé, whom she considers a particular crony of her little husband.

King James[2] continues to live contentedly at Saint Germain; the Jesuits put this down to philosophy, but everybody else says it is apathy that keeps him so quiet.

His so-called son[3] is brought up with great care, and so is the latter's little sister. The Queen[4] seems

[1] "François Louis de Bourbon, Prince de Conti, distinguished himself at the siege of Luxembourg and other places, and was elected King of Poland in 1697; but was soon supplanted by the King of Saxony. He was the son of Armand de Bourbon, Prince de Conti, natural son of Henri IV, and died at Paris in 1709, aged forty-five." —(A'Beckett's *Universal Biography*.)

[2] James II of England, born October 1633, ascended the throne 1685, died 6th September 1701, took refuge at St. Germain, near Paris, 1690, under the protection of Louis XIV, after his defeat at the battle of the Boyne by William III, Prince of Orange. He died in the Palace of St. Germain after twelve years of exile, and was buried in the Benedictine Monastery at Paris.—(*Trans.*)

[3] Prince James Francis Edward, commonly called the Chevalier de St. George, or the Pretender, only son of James II, born June 1688, died 30th December 1765. It was thought by certain persons that he was a *spurious* child, who had been passed off on the queen, the *real* child, it was said, was still-born; there is, however, no existing proof of this assertion; and Madame Du Noyer's friend probably merely alludes to the current gossip on this matter.—(*Trans.*)

[4] The Princesse Marie Béatrix d'Este, daughter of the Duke of Modena, born 1658, died 7th May 1718. She had five daughters, who all died in infancy, and one son, Prince James Francis Edward.—(*Trans.*)

overwhelmed with sadness since her dethronement. In truth, she has fallen low from a very high estate, and I am thankful that my humbler rank preserves *me* from such a downfall.

Everybody took the baths this year at Porte Saint Bernard; and all the city came to see the sight, instead of going for a drive; so there were quantities of carriages along the banks of the river. The other day when the two Loison sisters[1] were bathing there, and had their tent surrounded by various "marine gods" (amongst whom was Monsieur le Duc[2]), the wife of a councillor, who was bathing near them, called out to one of her friends: "Just look at those Loisons!" They overheard her, and the younger replied: "You are scurrilous, and very vulgar!" "Well," replied the councillor's wife, "perhaps we can give you some other names, but every one knows you are miserable and abandoned creatures!"

At this the Loisons took fire, although they were in the water. Then, backed up by the Prince, they screamed out: "Monsieur le Duc, come to our help! Just see how we are being treated."

But Monsieur le Duc replied: "Ladies, I am delighted to share your favours, but not your quarrels." This sally was thought very witty, so

[1] Two sisters, celebrated beauties and courtesans.—(*Trans.*)

[2] The Duc de Bourgogne, grandson of Louis XIV, and son of the Dauphin of France, was born in 1682. He became Dauphin on the death of his father, but died in 1712, without succeeding to the throne of France.—(*Trans.*)

I thought I must tell it to you. The opera and the theatre go on as usual, and supply our princes with lady-loves.

Monseigneur[1] has taken up with La Raisin, and people say that this actress has quite supplanted the Marquise du Roure, whom the King has banished, and whom I daresay you may come across, as she is supposed to be at Montpellier. Comte d'Estrades[2] poor man, would very much like to poach on Monseigneur's preserves; but he is quite out in the cold now, and La Raisin will not have anything more to do with him.

La Florence, a dancer at the opera, has made a conquest of the Duc de Chartres, who never cared a bit for his wife,[3] although she was bestowed on him by the King himself.

The Grand Prieur (Philippe, Duc de Vendôme), and Fanchon Moreau[4] are going on in their usual fashion at Clichy,[5] where several persons of high

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[1] Monseigneur, a title of Louis the Dauphin of France, who was born at Fontainebleau, 1st November 1661.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Godefroi, Comte d'Estrades, French statesman and field-marshal, born 1607, died 26th February 1686. He was ambassador-extraordinary to England in 1661; also to Holland in 1662. He was governor afterwards of Dunkirk, Mardyk, and Limburg, then viceroy of America. In 1685 he was made tutor and governor to the Duc de Chartres, but died soon after, aged seventy-nine. He was a man of great talents and courage, but of dissolute life and morals.—(*Trans.*)

[3] Duchesse de Chartres; she was a daughter of Louis XIV by his mistress, Madame de Montespan (note by Madame Du Noyer). She married the Duc de Chartres, son of the Duc d'Orleans, brother of Louis XIV; her husband afterwards succeeded to that title. (*Trans.*)

[4] Fanchon Moreau, a celebrated courtesan.—(*Trans.*)

[5] Clichy-la-Garenne is a small village on the right bank of the

rank have been to visit her, and where she receives them in grand style.

The Duc de Valentinois, who has one of the most charming wives at Court, neglects her for that little Du Fort, another opera dancer, to such an extent is there a rage now for actresses! Adieu! Every one is talking now of the Peace,[1] and every one wishes for it; we suffer here almost as much from the disasters of the war as they do on the frontier, for every one is ruined, and France is sadly in want of some of your miracle-mongers to raise her from the miserable condition into which she has sunk.

Burn this letter, for fear *I* should be burnt too; and tell me all about Avignon, so that if I *do* go there, I shall not feel myself quite a stranger.—I remain, etc. etc.

Seine, four and a half miles N.W. of Paris, of which, at the present time, it forms a suburb.—(*Trans.*)

[1] The Peace of Ryswick, 20th September 1697.—(*Trans.*)

LETTER III

FROM MADAME DU NOYER TO HER FRIEND

The Marquis des Essarts—The Comte de Suze—Their flirtations, and scandalous treatment of their wives—Madame Du Rhut—The Commendatore Maldachini—Cardinal Maldachini—The Commendatore's gallantry, riches, and garden—The Marquis de Castres—Cardinal de Bonzi—Signor Delfini—The Marquis and Marquise d'Onis or d'Aulnix—"Leave that old Pantaloon alone!"—Exile of the Marquis and his wife—Monsieur de Gau—Archbishop Fieschi—"Malapropisms" of the Marquis d'Onis—Florence—The Grand Duke of Tuscany—Madame d'Urban—Madame de Ganges—Her murder—Exile of Monsieur de Ganges—The Marquis de la Douse—His wife's murder—His execution at Toulouse—The Marquis de Peraut and his wife—His depravity and insults to her—The story of the page—"Wanted an heir!"—The Marquis's plots, and how they came to nought—The Marquis de Peraut dies—His widow marries the Marquis d'Urban—Their happy marriage—The Chevalier de B—— reappears on the scene.

AVIGNON.

MADAME,—I am very glad that you show some interest in our provincial amusements, and that you do not debar me from all hopes of welcoming you here.

You are not likely to feel like a stranger anywhere, and less here than in other places, for merit is appreciated everywhere, and especially valued here in Avignon.

You will find here your old friends the Marquis des Essarts and the Comte de Suze;[1] they are thought a great deal of here, and are our arbiters in all matters of gallantry; their own love affairs are, however, very transitory. The Marquis has a very religious wife, who takes to heart dreadfully all the trouble that her husband's infidelities cause her, and in truth, he only *too* often furnishes her with due cause to do so! The Comte lives "*en garçon*"; he is separated from his wife, has no children, and lives on an allowance of sixteen thousand *livres*[2] granted him by his next heirs, to whom he has made over the entail; he keeps open house and lives like a prince: but he would not be able to make such a show in Paris.

Ever since he broke off his connection with that fascinating creature, Madame Du Rhut,[3] he has flown "from flower to flower" without settling on any special one.

The Commendatore Maldachini, who commands the Italian cavalry corps in this place, and who is a brother of the Cardinal of the same name, is also one

[1] Suze, Suse, or Suza, a town of Piedmont, on the river Doire, at the foot of the Alpes Cottiæ, now called Mont Cenis, and Mont Genèvre, which separate Piedmont from Dauphiné. It gives its title to a marquisate.—(*Trans.*)

[2] The livre was an imaginary French coin of two kinds. The livre Tournois contained 20 sols Tournois, and each sol 12 deniers. The French livre, 20 sols and 12 deniers, but of different weight, the 12 French deniers being equal to 15 deniers Tournois, and one shilling English money; 16,000 livres equal about £11,000 per annum. —(*Trans.*)

[3] Madame du Rhut.—She is supposed to have written the spurious memoirs of Marie Mancini, wife of the Connétable Colonna.—(*Trans.*)

of our heroes. His gallantry is a little antiquated, but his purse is inexhaustible. He possesses a very pretty garden, where he entertains the ladies, and which he sometimes lends to his friends for the same purpose. The sister of the Marquis de Castres, (about whom you inquired), often goes there with the present Vice-Legate; but she does not know how to manage the latter properly. Proud of her first conquest, and of the rank of her uncle, Cardinal de Bonzi,[1] she imagines that every Vice-Legate ought to be at her feet, and that it is one of the duties of their office to be so; but Signor Delfini has proved to her that she is rather mistaken.

One day she asked him rather too haughtily for some favour for one of her *protégés*; but he refused it to her coldly; however, when she was reproaching him for this very bitterly, her husband, the Marquis d'Onis,[2] who never opens his mouth except to utter stupid things, exclaimed: "Madame, what are you making such a fuss about, over there? Leave that old pantaloon alone!" The Vice-Legate never said a word; but almost immediately after, the Mar-

[1] "Cardinal Clément de Bonzi, bishop of Béziers, acquired much reputation during the civil wars. The solicitations of the Duke de Montmorency, who had taken up arms against Louis XIII, could not shake the invincible loyalty of this prelate. He raised a regiment of foot at his own charges, and, heading the same, he went in 1637 to relieve Leucate, a town in Languedoc, which the Spaniards besieged, and joined Maréchal de Schomberg, who entirely defeated the enemy. He made also several fine foundations in his bishopric."—(Jeremy Collier's *Hist. Dict.*)

[2] This is probably intended for Aunis, formerly a district of Saintonge, which has for its principal town La Rochelle. The Marquis was famous at the Court and in society for his "malapropisms," which made him the butt and derision of all.—(*Trans.*)

quis and his wife received orders to quit the territories of his Holiness. This command disconcerted them not a little. They therefore summoned a meeting of their relations at the house of Monsieur de Gau, the father of the Marquis d'Onis, when it was resolved that they should throw themselves on the clemency of the Vice-Legate.

But he was inexorable, and turned a deaf ear to all the overtures they would have made him, although the Archbishop, who comes of the illustrious family of Fieschi,[1] tried to bring about a reconciliation; nothing therefore was left for them to do but to take their departure. The Marquis, with his usual "eloquence," proposed to his wife that she should start off in a posting-litter, so as to get away the quieter; but it ended in their going off together, with their luggage, and their nurse, and babies. The whole of their household, half on mules, half on horseback, departed from Avignon in the greatest scramble.

To some friends who came to see them off, the Marquis said, in reference to a fire which had occurred in his stables some days previously (but from which his state coach had fortunately escaped), "that his coach had been very near being burnt *alive!*" And when they congratulated him on the splendid condition of his horses, the witty Marquis replied: "How could they be anything else when

[1] The Fieschi.—One of the four principal families of Genoa and one of the most illustrious in all Italy; it gave no less than six cardinals to the Church.—(*Trans.*)

they lived upon as good hay as the King himself could eat!"

The Cardinal de Bonzi wanted to carry him off to Rome some time ago, just to see if he could give the lie to the proverb, *a good horse and a bad man were never the better for going to Rome.* (*Jamais bon cheval, ni méchant homme, ne s'amende pour aller à Rome.*)

Whilst they were at Florence the Cardinal presented him to the Grand Duke,[1] informing the latter that he was his nephew, and that his family was originally Florentine.

The Grand Duke asked him how long it was since his ancestors had left the country? "Well, your Highness," replied the Marquis in the most impudent manner, "ever since the Medicis[2] usurped the government!"

The Grand Duke pretended not to hear, but the Cardinal blushed to the tips of his fingers, and swore that he would never take his nephew anywhere with him again.

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[1] Cosmo III di Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, son of the Grand Duke Ferdinand II and the Princess Magdalena, sister of Ferdinand II, Emperor of Austria. He was born in 1642, and died 31st October 1723. He married the Princesse Marguerite Louise (daughter of Jean Baptiste de Bourbon, Duc d'Orléans), by whom he had three children, Ferdinand, born 1663, Jean Gaston, born 1671, and Magdalena, born 1665. Cosmo III was one of the wealthiest princes of Europe, and a great encourager of arts and learning, but addicted to the most absurd superstitions and bigoted practices. His reign lasted fifty-four years. He was separated from his wife on account of her quarrels with his mother, upon which the Grand Duchess retired to live in Paris.—(*Trans.*)

[2] The Medici family usurped the sovereignty of Tuscany in 1531, when Alessandro di Medici was made first Duke of Tuscany.—(*Trans.*)

If I were to begin telling you all his sayings, I should never come to an end of them; several people have made a collection of them, but I have never been fortunate enough to hear him.

As soon as I arrived here, I went to call on his wife, and he was present; but she seemed to guess what I had come for, and kept such a close watch over him, that she never let him speak at all. However often I addressed him, she always answered in his stead. Their disgrace happened a few days after this; but as they have gone into exile, I will leave them alone, and satisfy your inquiries about Madame d'Urban. You have already heard of the tragical end of her mother, Madame de Ganges; she was murdered by her husband's two brothers, who employed both dagger and poison to make away with this beautiful and unfortunate creature. The motive for this act was never discovered, and many people thought that the husband had connived at the murder; but the Parliament of Toulouse[1] merely condemned him to perpetual banishment, and confiscated his property; every one was surprised at this mild verdict, which was either too indulgent or too severe, and which in another instance cost the Marquis de la Douse his life.

This Marquis was accused of the same crime, that is to say, of having connived at the murder of his wife. He was carried off to the prison at Toulouse

[1] The Parliament of Toulouse ranked as second in the kingdom, and was first founded by Philippe IV, le Bel, who died 1314, and established by Charles VI, who died 1422.—(*Trans.*)

shortly after the Marquis de Ganges had been liberated from it. When his relations implored the King's pardon for him, his Majesty replied that there was no occasion for granting any pardon, as he was in the hands of the Parliament of Toulouse, and M. de Ganges had done very well without it.

However, the Parliament felt that an example must be made of some one. Monsieur de la Douse was therefore made the scape-goat, and was executed shortly after, whilst Monsieur de Ganges, who was undoubtedly quite as guilty, went unpunished. It is always the unlucky one who becomes "fruit for the gallows-tree."

The murderers of Madame de Ganges took refuge in flight; and the King bestowed all their property on their young brother, who was a Page the Bedchamber, and too young to have taken any part in the crime of his relatives. Madame de Ganges left two children, of whom one was the young Marquis whom you saw in Paris, and the other the lady[1] whom I have just mentioned. She was educated under the care of the Dowager Marquise de Ganges, her grandmother, and, at the age of twelve, married to the Marquis de Peraut, who was over seventy years old, and who had, in former days, been a lover of her grandmother's. The young girl gave her hand to him without the slightest repugnance. He was immensely wealthy,

[1] The Marquise d'Urban or de Durban, formerly Marquise de Peraut.—(*Trans.*)

nobly born, and imbued with all the courtesy of the gallants of the old school.

He had a brother whom he thought unworthy of his affection, and of being his heir, and it was to cut him off, that he résolved to marry; but he had come to this resolve a little late in the day. The more he prayed for an heir, the less chance there seemed of one. Then, recognising his failure, he sought for a remedy. He loved his charming wife passionately, but he hated his brother bitterly. These two passions inspired him with an extraordinary design; he had a page who was very handsome, and came of a very good family; he took him into his confidence, and after having sworn him to inviolable secrecy, and presented him with some gifts, confided to him how he longed to have a child, which, if not his own, should at least be his wife's.

The page trembled; he was in love with the Marquise, but had never dared to show it; he imagined therefore that the Marquis had divined his sentiments, and had laid this trap for him in order to disconcert him.

It would have taken very little more to have made him confess all, throw himself at his lord's feet, and implore, at the same time, pardon and dismissal.

The Marquis, who perceived his confusion, reassured him, and promised that he himself would do all he could to help him to make a conquest of Madame de Peraut; and in order to assist him further in this, he empowered him to spend money lavishly. As you may imagine, the Marquis found

his page very amenable. He had never been served with such eagerness. At the end of three days he was magnificently attired, and this apparel, combined with the joy of his task, made him look handsomer than ever. He was always now with Madame de Peraut and always anxious to please her. She was young and lively, and showed no hesitation in flirting with him, and everything seemed to be going on smoothly, when the page, after having allowed his eyes and his tenderness to speak for him, now thought he would declare his passion; but he was indignantly repulsed, and threatened that if he ever alluded to it again, he should be handed over to the vengeance of the Marquis. This threat did not, however, cause him much alarm, and he went and told him of the failure of his proposal. The Marquis begged him not to be discouraged; but it must certainly have been a novel thing to hear a husband making a confidant of his rival, giving him advice, and consoling him for his lady-love's hardheartedness!

The page became bolder after this conversation, and returned to the charge. One morning, when Madame de Peraut was at her toilette, a good opportunity presented itself; for, after having wept and sighed, he threw himself at her feet, and indulged in such caresses as were only excusable in a young man of seventeen so deeply in love.

The indignant Marquise screamed for her maids; but the page, following his lord's advice, had bribed one of them, who had sent the others out of hearing. The Marquise was excessively surprised at finding

herself alone with the page, and, after thrusting him from her angrily, with wrathful looks, rushed, all dishevelled, into her husband's room.

She was as beautiful as Aurora in her perturbation, and the page, as he pursued her, seemed another Adonis.

She accused him openly to her husband of having been disrespectful, but what was her surprise when, instead of the rage which she expected him show, the Marquis calmly replied that what she said was incredible, and that to him the page had always appeared strictly honourable; that he supposed she was angry with him for something, and sought for some pretext for dismissing him; but that he begged her not to compel him to send him away, for the young man had been highly recommended to him, and he was bound by an obligation to retain him under his care.

The Marquise was perfectly amazed at this reply. She did not know what to think of it, and, finding that she had no security for herself but in extreme reserve, treated the luckless page in such a fashion that he was beside himself with despair.[1]

Each day he told his sorrows to his lord, who was in equal despair at finding his wife so virtuous, (judging by what people say, there are not *many*

[1] Here follows an anecdote, best omitted in these pages. It suffices to say that the old Marquis did all he could to give the page every opportunity that would enable him to encompass the dishonour of the Marquise, and bring about the end which he, the Marquis, had in view. But his design failed, thanks to the unassailable virtue of his young wife, a quality, unfortunately, only too rare in the dissolute reign of Louis XIV.—(*Trans.*)

husbands who have the same complaint to make *nowadays*)!

Perceiving, therefore, that his wife's heart was impregnable, he rewarded the page for his intended services, gave him his dismissal, and died shortly after, grieving at having to leave his wealth to those whom he had regarded as enemies.

But before his death, he confided all that I have just related to you, to one of his intimate friends.

This friend had a very handsome son, and he thought it would be a very good thing if he could marry him to the young widow. The family of D'Urban is one of the noblest in Avignon, and the marriage was finally arranged by their relatives, as soon as the period of mourning was past.

The young Marquis d'Urban found in the lovely widow all the charms of a young maiden, and she found him very different to her defunct husband. They lived in most perfect unity until the Chevalier came upon the scene. I must leave them here for the present, for my letter is quite long enough already; I will tell you the end of their history in the very next letter I write to you.—I remain, etc., etc.

LETTER IV

REPLY FROM HER FRIEND

Madame d'Urban—Monseigneur de Harlai, Archbishop of Paris—The Duchesse de Lesdiguières—The Bishop of Châlons—Field-marshal the Duc de Noailles—The Abbé de Noailles—Madame de Maintenon—Marriage of her niece, Mademoiselle d'Aubigné—Mademoiselle de la Vallière—Madame de Montespan—Her exile—Mademoiselle de Fontanges—The King's settlements for his natural children—The Duc de Chartres—The Duc du Maine—Mademoiselle de Montpensier—The Comte de Toulouse—The disgrace of Madame de Montespan—Her sister, the Abbess of Fontevrault—Monsieur de Pontchartrain—Madame de Maintenon and the Cabinet Councils—The Prince of Orange—Retired life of Madame de Maintenon—Saint Cyr—Madame de Chevreuse—Madame de Seignelai—Madame de Montchevreüil—The Princesse de Conti—Madame d'Harcourt—The Abbé de Fénélon—"Quietism"—The Duc de Bourgogne—Paris—"A bit of ancient history."

PARIS.

MADAME,—You are very cruel to raise my curiosity and then break off suddenly! Really, madame, it is not fair; you know how eager I am to hear Madame d'Urban's adventures; you should not stop just in the middle of your story.

I assure you that I could almost quarrel with you for it, if I were not so anxious to coax you to

tell the rest of the history: pray tell me some more as soon as you can, and do not be afraid that I find your letters too long; they amuse me far too much for that; and if I did not feel cross with you I would set you the example by writing you ten or twelve sheets myself! I have plenty of material wherewith to fill them.

Monsieur de Harlai,[1] our archbishop, is dead, and our satirical poets are amusing themselves with the tribulation of the Duchesse de Lesdiguières[2] over this loss. In the room of this prelate the King has appointed the Bishop of Châlons,[3] brother of Field-marshal the Duc de Noailles,[4] and has bestowed the

[1] François de Harlai or Harlay, archbishop, successively of Rouen and Paris. He was a great favourite of Anne of Austria and also of Louis XIV, although he was a man of coarse manners and doubtful private life. He died on 6th August 1695, at the age of seventy.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Duchesse de Lesdiguières, wife of François de Bonne, Duc de Lesdiguières, born 1543, of a noble Huguenot family of St. Bonnet-de-Champsant, in Dauphiné. The Duc was a field-marshal and a distinguished leader in the Huguenot wars; he afterwards abjured his religion, and was in consequence made grand-connétable de France. After receiving high honours from Henri IV and Louis XIII, he died on 28th September 1626, aged eighty-four. The glory of his talents was stained by the most horrible vices, and such flagrant depravity, that his wife left him.—(*Trans.*)

[3] Louis Anthoine de Noailles, second son of Anne Jules, first Duc de Noailles, born 1651, died 4th May 1729. In 1679 he was elected Bishop of Cahors, and translated to Châlons in 1680. In 1695, on the death of François de Harlai, Archbishop of Paris, he was selected by Louis XIV to fill the vacant see. In 1700 he was elected cardinal, and was also in right of his archbishopric, peer of France, and Duc de St. Cloud, and created as well, commander of the Order of the Holy Ghost, and Superior of the College of the Sorbonne. He was a man of great purity of life, friendly hospitality, unbounded charity, charming manners, and great kindliness of heart, and died universally beloved and lamented.—(*Trans.*)

[4] Adrien Maurice, second Duc de Noailles, son of Anne Jules,

bishopric of Châlons on their brother, the Abbé de Noailles.

This family is very much thought of, because they have worked their way into the good graces of Madame de Maintenon,[1] which is the only way to gain favour with the King. She is about to marry her niece, one of the daughters of the Comte d'Aubigné,[2] to the son of the Duc de Noailles; another of the daughters has married a nephew of Madame de la Vallière;[3] all that is wanting to him now is to marry a third into the family of Madame de Montespan,[4] so as to complete his left-handed

first Duc, born 1678, died 24th June 1766. He was Maréchal de France, and distinguished as much in that profession as for his wise counsels as minister. He died at the advanced age of eighty-eight, beloved and respected by king, country, and friends.—(*Trans.*)

[1] Françoise d'Aubigné, Marquise de Maintenon (widow of Scarron the poet), and the Comte d'Aubigné, were the children of the profligate Count Constant d'Aubigné, who was the son of Count Théodore Agrippe d'Aubigné, a distinguished Huguenot of St. Maury, in France, who had been created by Henri IV, successively, gentleman of his bedchamber, maréchal de camp, Governor of the Island and Château de Maillezais, and Vice-Admiral of Guienne and Bretagne. She was born in 1635 in the prison of Niort, and died at Saint Cyr, 15th April 1719, aged eighty-four.—(*Trans.*)

[2] *See* previous note.

[3] Mademoiselle Louise Françoise de la Baume Le Blanc, mistress of Louis XIV, born 1644, created by him Duchesse de la Vallière. She was lady-in-waiting to the Duchesse d'Orléans (Princess Henrietta of England), and had for two years been secretly in love with the King, who finally discovered her passion for him. Her influence over the King was always used for the good of himself and the country. The estate of Vaujour and barony of St. Christophe were raised to a duchy, and presented to her by her royal lover. She was finally superseded by Madame de Montespan, and retired to the convent of Carmelite nuns at St. Jacques, near Paris, and died there on 6th June 1710, under the cloistral name of Sœur Louise de la Miséricorde, at the age of sixty-six.—(*Trans.*)

[4] Françoise Athenaïs Mortimar, wife of the Marquis de Montespan, and mistress of Louis XIV, born 1641, died 28th May 1707. She had

alliance with the King; but poor Madame de Montespan would be but a broken reed just now.

The King has exiled her from the Court, besides having exiled her long ago from his heart; it is said that ever since the death of La Fontanges[1] he has detested her, and that he is only waiting till he has settled all her children in life to send her away for good.

He has done very well for them, as you know; for instance, the eldest girl married the senior Prince of the Blood, and the youngest married M. le Duc de Chartres, the only son of the King's brother, and heir-presumptive to the crown, supposing that Monseigneur dies without children.

The Duc du Maine,[2] although he is a lame cripple, has married a daughter of M. le Prince, and holds the principality of Dombes,[3] and all the pro-

by the King two daughters and three sons, the eldest, created Duc du Maine. Her husband, with a disgraceful condonation of his wife's dishonour, received the sum of one hundred thousand crowns, and was banished from Paris for having at first endeavoured to resist the intrigue between the King and his erring wife. She was exiled from the Court in 1691, and died at Bourbon on a pension of 10,000 louis d'or *per annum*.—(*Trans.*)

[1] Mademoiselle Marie Angélique Fontanges, created Duchesse de Fontanges by Louis XIV, after she became his mistress. The Abbé Choisy said of her, "that she was as beautiful as an angel, but as silly as a goose!" She was born in 1661, and died 28th June 1681, aged twenty. It was supposed by many that she was poisoned.—(*Trans.*)

[2] The Duc du Maine, eldest son of Louis XIV and his mistress the Marquise de Montespan, was a cripple from his childhood; the Marquise de Maintenon was his governess, and under her care he was sent to the mineral baths of Barèges, in hopes of a cure, but the remedy was without effect.—(*Trans.*)

[3] Dombes was a principality comprising eleven Châtellainies, the principal of which was Trévoux, its capital; the principality was

perty which belonged to the late Mademoiselle de Montpensier.[1]

The Comte de Toulouse[2] is an admiral, and is sure to make a grand match.

In short, Madame de Montespan, although in disgrace, may pride herself on seeing her children exalted to the highest rank.

It was her own son, the Duc du Maine, who was hard-hearted enough to announce to her that she was exiled from the Court, and that the King required her suite of apartments, and the very next day the son himself was installed in them!

You can imagine how deeply his mother must have felt all this! She implored the King for one

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situated between Mâconnais, and Lyonnais, La Bresse, and La Saône; formerly it formed a part of the kingdom of Burgundy, until Louis XIV bestowed it on his natural son, the Duc de Maine.—(*Trans.*)

[1] The Princesse Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, styled Duchesse de Montpensier, sometimes "La Grande Mademoiselle," was the daughter of Prince Jean Baptiste Gaston, Duc d'Orléans, and niece of Louis XIII, born 1627, died 5th April 1693, aged sixty-six. She was a clever, passionate, bold, and intriguing woman, and during the wars of the Fronde not only allied herself to the party of the Duc de Condé, but ordered her fellow rebels to fire the cannon of the Bastille on the troops of Louis XIV. She had set her heart on marrying Charles II, King of England, but he refused the alliance, and in pique she married Anthoine, Duc de Lauzun, one of the favourite courtiers of Louis XIV. The union was a most unhappy one; she was violent, and jealous, and quarrelsome, and he ungrateful and imperious, and a most unfaithful husband. It is related of him that on his return one day from hunting, he threw himself into a chair, and shouted to her, "Louise d'Orléans, pull off my boots!" She never forgave him for this insolence, and left him at once and retired to a convent. She published two romances, entitled *Relation de l'Isle imaginaire*, and *La Princesse de Paphlagonie*, as well as her own *Memoirs* in 8 vols. 12mo, which are most curious, scandalous, and entertaining.—(*Trans.*)

[2] The Comte de Toulouse, second son of Louis XIV and the Marquise de Montespan.—(*Trans.*)

more interview, at which, seeing she had nothing further to gain, she flew into a rage, and reproached him with his ingratitude for all she had done for him.

The King put up with this scene simply, and only, because she was a woman, and because he knew it was the last he would have with her.

She now passes her time alternately with her sister, the Abbess of Fontevrault,[1] and the sisterhood of Saint Joseph in the Faubourg Saint Germain, founded by herself.

People here say that our new Archbishop is trying to bring about a reconciliation between her and her husband; but after all the public scandal about the latter, it would be a farce for him to take her back.

Madame de Maintenon is triumphant, however, and in her apartments are decided the destinies of the State.

The King goes there every day, on his return from his walk, and remains with her till ten o'clock; Monsieur de Pontchartrain, the Comptroller-General of Finance, also goes there; Madame de Maintenon sits in a corner and knits, *apparently* without paying any attention to what passes; but every time the minister makes any suggestions, the King turns

[1] Fontevrault is situated on the river Loire, five leagues from Chinon, and three from Saumur, in the province of Anjou. It was celebrated for its order of monks and nuns, the abbess of which presided over *both* communities. The order was established by Robert d'Arbrissel, born in 1047, at Arbrissel, a village of Brittany; he died on 25th February 1117, having founded the abbey in 1099.—(*Trans.*)

round to Madame de Maintenon, and asks her—"What do *you* say to that, Madame?" She gives her opinion modestly, and whatever she says is carried out. It is astonishing, how, with neither youth nor beauty, she has been able to inspire such an extraordinary passion, and such constancy; but, as the Prince of Orange[1] once said, "the King is the very opposite to all other sovereigns; for he has young ministers, and an old mistress." She never appears in public, except when she takes drives with the King; and then she may be seen sitting far back in the carriage, doing worsted work. Every morning she goes to Saint Cyr,[2] to inspect that nursery of young girls, sent there from every quarter, thanks to the poverty of their parents; she is home again by the time the King is up, and he always goes regularly to wish her good morning. Madame de Maintenon attends mass[3] at sunrise, in order to

[1] The Prince William of Orange, afterwards William III, King of England. He was the son of William II, Prince of Orange, by the Princess Henrietta Maria Stuart, eldest daughter of Charles I, King of England. He was born eight days after his father's death, on the 4th of November 1650; he married on 4th November 1677, the Princess Mary, eldest daughter of James II, King of England; he became King 13th February 1689, and died from a shock, resulting from a fall from his horse, on the 8th March 1702, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. All his children died in their infancy, and the Queen on 28th December 1694.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Saint Cyr was a religious community, established by the Marquise de Maintenon, which included within its walls a gratuitous educational institute for three hundred young ladies of the nobility and gentry *only*. It was situated on the borders of the park at Versailles, and was, through her persuasions, richly endowed by the King. On his death, in 1715, she retired to Saint Cyr, and acted as directress and instructress of the inmates, till her own death in 1719.—(*Trans.*)

[3] Voltaire remarks in reference to Madame de Maintenon's appear-

avoid being mobbed by curious people who flock to look at her, and with the exception of Madame de Chevreuse,[1] Madame de Seignelai,[2] Madame de Montchevreüil, the Princess, Madame d'Harcourt,[3] and Madame d'Udicourt (the wife of the master of the wolf-hounds), she never sees any one; I have, however, had the honour of speaking to her several times, and I found her very sweet-mannered, and very polite. I do not know whether she is afraid of exciting envy, or whether she does not dare aspire to the rank that might be granted to her; however that may be, she does not arrogate any to herself. She has even dropped the title of Marquise from her name, and calls herself simply Madame de Maintenon: she will not even be created a duchess, she aspires to something more exalted than that, and the projects she had formed on that point have just brought disgrace on the Abbé de Fénélon,[4] Arch-

ance in church: "Louis XIV, en épousant Madame de Maintenon, ne se donna qu'une compagne agréable et soumise. La seule distinction publique, qui faisait sentir son élévation secrète, c'est qu' à la messe elle occupait une de ces petites tribunes, ou lanternes dorées, qui ne semblaient faites que pour le roi et la reine. D'ailleurs, nul extérieur de grandeur."—("Maintenon," Voltaire, *Dict. Hist.*)

[1] Jeanne Marie Thérèse, wife of the Duc de Chevreuse, and eldest of the three daughters of the elder Jean Baptiste Colbert, Marquis de Seignelai and de Châteauneuf-sur-Cher, Baron de Sceaux, and Limières, and Ormois, etc. She married Charles Honoré Albert, Duc de Chevreuse on the 3d February 1667. The Duke was "Capitaine-Lieutenant des Chevaux-Légers de la Garde du Roi."—(*Trans.*)

[2] Marquise de Seignelai, wife of Jean Baptiste Colbert, Marquis de Seignelai (junior), eldest son of Jean Baptiste Colbert, Marquis de Seignelai.—(*Trans.*)

[3] Wife of the Marquis d'Harcourt.—(*Trans.*)

[4] François de Salignac de la Mothe Fénélon, Archbishop of Cam-

bishop of Cambrai, who has been accused of being a Quietist.

He has been dismissed from his tutorship of the Duc de Bourgogne, and there are some who would wish also to deprive him of his Archbishopric.

As he is an old friend of yours, I am sure you will like to learn the details of this affair, which has made a great sensation in society; but this is a splendid opportunity for me to revenge myself on you, for the trick you played me in your last letter; so you shall not hear anything more *now*, it shall be reserved for another occasion; but, all the same, you must, if you please, do me the kindness to tell me the end of Madame d'Urban's history. Apparently, there is nothing like travelling to make people clever, La Fontaine's[1] swallow was nothing in comparison to you!

brai; he came of a noble family, and was born in 1651, at the Château de Fénélon, near Quercy, in Périgord. At the age of twenty-four he entered priestly orders, and was appointed preceptor to the Dauphin (the Duc de Bourgogne) and his younger brothers. He was a man of pure and unblemished character, of wonderful courtesy and sweetness of manner, of unbounded but discriminate charity, and of princely hospitality. St. Simon, in his *Memoirs*, describes him as a "tall, lean, well-made man, with a large nose, eyes whence fire and sense flowed in a torrent, a physiognomy resembling none which I have elsewhere seen, and which could not be forgotten after it had been once beheld." As regards *Quietism*, or the so-called peculiar religious tenets of the fanatical Madame de Guyon, he was blamed for treating her with too much indulgence, for palliating her eccentricities, and for refusing to condemn her publicly; but beyond this, he never subscribed to, or followed in any way, the doctrines which she set forth. This kindly, learned, and beloved prelate died on the 7th January 1715.—(*Trans.*)

[1] Jean de la Fontaine, the famous French poet and fabulist, was born at Château-Thierry in 1621. His father was an "overseer of waters and forests," and his mother the daughter of a bailiff. Having

You know what Avignon was called in the time of our ancestors, and all that happened in the thirteenth century. Now that is what I call a clever woman! Not to be behindhand with you, I can tell you that Cæsar informs us, that Paris[1] was once called *Lutetia*, and that it was also called Paris, after a certain nation called the Parisii, so named from Paris, the son of Romus, eighteenth King of the Celtic Gauls. You see now what emulation brings about; I should never have learnt even as much as that but for your example! Adieu! Don't be cross with me!—I remain, etc., etc.

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incurred disgrace in France, and left the Order of the Oratory at the age of nineteen, he devoted himself entirely to literature, and on the death of his patroness, the Duchesse de Bouillon, fled to England, and, deserting his wife, took up his residence in London, where he was made gentleman-in-waiting to Queen Henrietta Maria; and, whilst holding this appointment, resided for twenty years under the roof of the Marquise de la Sablière, who used to observe jocosely, whenever parting with a servant, that "she was only able to keep three animals —her dog, her cat, and her La Fontaine." He was a man of extraordinary absence of mind, during which he did the most unbecoming things; he was also of gross manners and conversation, and a licentious libertine. After the death of the Marquise de la Sablière, he lived in the households of the Duchesse de Mazarin and the Comte de St. Evremond. He died 13th April 1695, aged seventy-four.—(*Trans.*)

[1] Eusebius states that the foundation of Paris was earlier than that of Rome, and this is confirmed by Julius Cæsar. The Greeks and Latins called it variously Lutetia, Lecetia, Leucotetia, Parisii, and Lutetia Parisiorum. All authors have declared that the name was derived from the marshes on which the first city was built, Lutetia coming from *Lutum*, dirt.—(*Trans.*)

LETTER V

FROM MADAME DU NOYER TO HER FRIEND

Madame d'Urban—The Chevalier de B—— —Their intrigues—Monsieur d'Urban—The Chevalier and his handbell—He abuses Madame d'Urban—A jealous husband—Nearly trapped—The Chevalier takes flight—A dinner of reprobates—Murder of Monsieur Le Coq, the pastrycook—The Vice-Legate—Cardinal de B—— —The Chevalier returns—The weeping lady—She gives him her portrait—He leaves it behind—She sends it after him—He nails it on the post-chaise—Picture *versus* payment—Madame d'Urban's flight—Le Jeune, schoolmaster—"Money covers a multitude of sins"—Madame du Noyer's tour in the principality of Orange—Beautiful scenery—Monsieur d'Urfé—William of Orange—His valour—Antiquities of Orange—Arch of Caius Marius—Description of the town—The miracle of the crown—Disgrace of Fénélon, Archbishop of Cambrai.

ORANGE.

MADAME,—I see very well that you give no quarter; but without paying you back your compliments, which are no longer in fashion, I will finish telling you about Madame d'Urban, who, when I last mentioned her, seemed to be living in perfect unity with her husband, until the arrival of the Chevalier de B——, who brought division into the family circle.

He met Madame d'Urban at some parties, and

thought her very charming; but directly he heard that slander had hitherto left her untouched, he wished, more from vanity, than for any love he had for her, to assail her reputation. He showed her, therefore, extraordinary attention. Monsieur d'Urban, who trusted his wife thoroughly, gave her entire liberty; but, "as there is a time for everything," her "hour of love" had come, and her virtue began to totter before the attacks of the prince.

He soon became aware of the havoc he had made in her heart, and as he only wanted to make her a subject for public gossip, he took care to chatter about her all over the town.

He prowled about all day in front of her house, and when he left, walked up and down the streets till dawn, ringing a handbell!

The townsfolk were surprised at this new fashion, and gossiped to each other from their windows, saying, "There is the Prince who is making love to Madame d'Urban, going away from her house!"

Every one added their quota to this, and there were very few people who believed that they only spent their evenings playing at *Ombre!* In short, he made her so talked about, that the relations of Monsieur d'Urban informed the latter, that he was the laughing-stock of the town. Then at last his eyes were opened, and he forbade his wife to continue the acquaintance. As soon as he had left her, she sent for the Chevalier, and announced to him their mutual disgrace; but it would have taken a

good deal to make *him* feel it as much as she did. He told her "that it was all her own fault, that she had no gumption, and that she had behaved like a fool," and talked to her with the utmost contempt.

The poor woman dissolved into tears; but her husband, who had warned the Chevalier seriously never to re-enter his house, was informed that he was there, and came back with the intention of chastising him. In order to effect this, he locked the house-door on the inside, and took possession of the key, and then posted himself and some of his men-servants in an ante-room. It was very easy from thence to overhear his wife's conversation with the Chevalier, so he placed himself stealthily close to the door, and did not lose a single word.

The Chevalier, who was not paying much attention to what Madame d'Urban was saying to him, on his part also listened intently, and soon became aware of the trap that was being laid for him.

In order therefore to escape from it, he opened a window that looked out upon the street, and after saying to Madame d'Urban, "Get out of this business as well as you can!" jumped down out of it without doing himself any injury, and thus escaped from the vengeance of Monsieur d'Urban.

The first thing he did was to chatter about this adventure everywhere; after that, he invited the most depraved young men in Avignon to sup with him at a confectioner's named Le Coq, brother to the famous Le Coq of the Rue Montorgüeil.

The poor man furnished an excellent supper for them, which they found so good, that they sat at table the whole night through. Meanwhile they slandered Madame d'Urban in the most disgusting fashion, and then, when morning dawned, being both gorged and dead drunk, sent for the unfortunate Le Coq, and made him as drunk as themselves.[1]

. . . . . .

The Vice-Legate, who had been lying awake till dawn (in consequence of some indisposition), was the first to hear of the deed, and was horrified at it.

Through the interference of Cardinal de B—— the Chevalier was not arrested, but he sent him a message that if he did not leave the city at once, he would deliver him up to justice.

The Chevalier was obliged to sneak away, and gave orders to pack up and to prepare his coach for his departure; but whilst this was doing, he took it into his head that he would like to see Madame d'Urban once more.

In spite of all the scandal that had taken place, he did not find it very difficult to manage this. Monsieur d'Urban had not entered his wife's apartment since the Chevalier had fled from it by the window, and she was still there, weeping alone over her misery, when the Chevalier stood at the door. The waiting-woman, whom he had bribed, let him in

[1] Here follows an anecdote that will not bear reproduction; suffice it to say, that after suffering tortures from the hands of his drunken customers, the unfortunate confectioner succumbed in a few hours to his frightful injuries.—(*Trans.*)

without any noise whilst the rest of the household was still asleep, for it was only seven o'clock in the morning.

Madame d'Urban, who was deeply attached to this man, saw him enter with delight, and for a few moments stopped the agonized sobbing that had overcome her. He told her of his misfortune, or rather of his crime; but she even made excuses for him in that, and only attributed it to too much wine.

He told her that he quitted her with sorrow, and lamented that she had not had the kindness to give him her portrait. Madame d'Urban was so charmed with this revival of his tenderness that she took down a large portrait of herself, which was hanging near her bed next to one of her husband; and, having no other to give the Chevalier, she cut the canvas out of its frame, rolled it up, and begged him to put it in his pocket; but he laid it down on the table, and, after a very cold farewell, departed without taking it. No sooner had he left her, than Madame d'Urban burst out weeping anew.

The hurried departure of the Chevalier gave her a fresh subject of grief, and her maid found it impossible to console her. "No, my dear Laura," she said to the girl, "I shall never again be able to exist with honour or pleasure; I have lost the only man I ever loved; I bestowed all my affection on him, and his conduct has cost me my reputation, and my husband's confidence, and public esteem. I have now neither lover nor happiness at home; how happy, alas! should I be, could I forget my love!" Whilst she

was thus lamenting, she perceived her portrait which the Chevalier had left on the table.

"Ah!" cried she, "how unhappy I am! The poor fellow will be in despair when he finds he has not got my portrait. Alas! he was in such grief that he forgot to take it with him. Do send some one after him, I entreat you; never mind what comes of it, he must have it taken to him."

Laura carried out the orders of her mistress immediately, by sending a confidential servant after him with the painting.

The man took a post-horse, and came up to the Chevalier just as he was himself going to change horses. As soon as he caught sight of the chaise, he shouted with all his might to the postillion to stop; but the Chevalier, who thought that the police were following in his wake, told him to drive on all the faster.

However, he was obliged to pull up at the post-house; and there the servant dismounted, and after bowing to the Chevalier, presented him very respectfully with the portrait confided to his care.

The Chevalier, who had by this time got over his fright, told him to go about his business, and take back the portrait to Madame d'Urban, as he wished to have nothing to do with it.

The man, however, insisted that he had received orders to deliver it up to him, and that he did not dare return to Madame d'Urban without having done so.

Upon this the Chevalier, seeing that the man

was determined to follow him, obtained from the postillion four nails and a hammer, and himself nailed the portrait at the back of the post-chaise, on that part where his coat of arms was painted; this done, he drove off, after bidding farewell to Madame d'Urban's messenger, who went his own way, greatly discomfited.

At the second post-house, after the horses had been changed, the postillion, who was to go back, asked for his fare.

The Chevalier refused to give it him, but finally compromised the matter by giving him the portrait of Madame d'Urban. The very same evening, the postillion exhibited it for sale at Avignon, where the affair was at once known everywhere. This circumstance increased Madame d'Urban's unhappiness and her husband's fury; and she was so terrified at the consequences of it, that on the following day she disappeared. Some declare that she has fled to Paris; others say, that she has gone to meet the Chevalier, who is returning from thence; but there are others again, who judge more charitably of her, and say that she has only gone to see a son whom she loves dearly, and who is at Le Jeune's school[1] in the Faubourg Saint Germain.

Be this as it may, nothing but this affair is now talked of here, and Monsieur d'Urban's relations held a meeting, and resolved that a *lettre de cachet*[2]

[1] Le Jeune was a celebrated schoolmaster who took in boarders.—(Note by Madame Du Noyer.)

[2] "*Lettres de cachet*, or sealed letters, issued by the kings of France, and countersigned by a secretary of state, on the authority of

should be asked for, in order to authorise the imprisonment of Madame d'Urban. One of these relatives, who was about to go to Paris, was to be charged with the commission, but he refused to undertake it, and matters stand just as they were before.

Everybody is pitying "poor Monsieur d'Urban," and saying "that his wife's virtue has come under an unlucky star."

In short, it seems hardly probable that after having been so faithful to a seventy-year-old husband, she should be *un*faithful to one who is young and handsome, unless the stars *had* shed a bad influence over her.

The relations of the poor confectioner were appeased by two hundred pistoles[1] that the Cardinal de B——[2] bestowed on them, and it was given out that the fellow died of apoplexy, and that the accusation made against the Chevalier was all a joke; so

which persons were suddenly seized and imprisoned, were not frequently employed until the time of Louis XIV, 1643-1715. Disraeli (*Curiosities of Literature*, iii. 196) says: 'Father Joseph, the secret agent of Cardinal Richelieu, was the inventor of *lettres de cachet*, disguising that instrument of despotism by the amusing term of a *sealed letter*.' During the reign of his successor, Louis XV (1715-1774), they were openly sold by the mistress of one of that monarch's ministers. The practice afterwards led to great abuses. Michelet says that Saint Florentine alone gave away 50,000, adding, 'they were the object of a profitable traffic; they were sold to fathers who wanted to get rid of their sons, and given to pretty women who were inconvenienced by their husbands.' They were abolished at the Revolution."—(Townsend's *Manual of Dates*.)

[1] Pistole, an old French or Spanish coin, equivalent to seventeen shillings of present English coinage, or ten livres, French coinage.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Probably Cardinal de Bonzi.—(*Trans.*)

now he is quite exonerated in the opinion of the King, who had desired to be informed of the facts of the case, and who was very glad when he was told that the whole thing was an invention. The occurrence did actually take place, nevertheless, but "money covers a multitude of sins!"

Now you have heard all that you wished to know about these miserable lovers; you were quite right in thinking that they would be parted by some catastrophe.

It all happened in a very short space of time, only since my last letter. I should have told you about it ere this, but I have been making a tour in a neighbouring province, viz. the principality of Orange.[1] It seems to me as if I were living in that country of Fairyland, where there were so many kings living close to each other, that they met constantly out hunting; it appeared so odd to me, to travel in one day, through three different principalities, that I thought I must be under some enchantment!

The beauty of the country also might have helped me to this delusion, for the scenery in Orange is most beautiful, and far beyond what Monsieur d'Urfé[2] described of the banks of the Lignon.

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[1] Orange, a commune and town of France, long the capital of a principality, from which the royal family of the Netherlands still derive the title of their crown princes, but Louis XIV obtained possession of the territory by the Peace of Utrecht in 1713. The town, which is on the Aigues, department of Vaucluse, is celebrated for its magnificent Roman remains, and was one of the centres of the Huguenot disturbances.—(*Trans.*)

[2] "Honoré d'Urfé, Comte de Châteauneuf, and Marquis de Val-

I was delighted to see the city, so famous from the name of its illustrious prince. Indeed *William* will be far better known by our descendants than is Alexander. Like this hero of Greece, he has performed deeds which savour of the miraculous, and like him also, finding the possessions of his ancestors too limited, he has extended his dominion over three great kingdoms. Thus when I entered this little state, I looked upon it as "the Macedonia" of the Alexander of our own days.

This country suffered so much during the recent wars, that Nature alone in it remains beautiful; the fortifications of its capital have been demolished, and its walls razed to the ground; it is indeed a piteous sight.

On approaching Orange, I saw in the suburbs a monument erected by the Romans; it is a triumphal arch,[1] raised in honour of Caius Marius on his return from his victory over the Cimbrii, whom he defeated

romery, celebrated as a writer of romance, was born at Marseilles in 1567, and was educated in that city, and in the Jesuits' College of Tournon. After a marriage which was a source of great disquiet to him, he retired into Piedmont, where he devoted himself to letters. The only work which has transmitted his name to posterity was his romance of *Astrée*, which was part of the general reading of Europe for more than fifty years. . . . He died at Villefranche in 1625, aged fifty-eight" (A. Beckett, *Universal Biog.*) It is probable that Madame du Noyer alludes to some river in the romance.—(*Trans.*)

[1] This triumphal arch was erected by Caius Marius and Luctatius Catullus, after their great victory over the Cimbrii and Teutons. It suffered greatly in neighbouring wars, and especially from the Goths and Saracens. This wonderful structure is sixty-four feet in length, breadth, and height, and has three arched passages, the central and largest of which is twenty-eight and a half feet high; the arch is flanked by fine fluted Corinthian columns, and covered with splendid sculptured groups of warlike subjects.—(*Trans.*)

in the wide plain of Provence, now called after him, Camargue. The deeds of this Roman are pictured as naturally as life on the arch; one can there see his battles and his trophies, and even his magician, whom he took everywhere with him. Although it is extremely ancient, and was built long before the time of the Roman emperors, it is still in good preservation, and much visited by travellers.

The town is small, but very handsome, and its residents are very polished, and many of them of noble rank. They are very anxious to come again under the rule of their Prince, whom they consider a king, although France has not yet acknowledged him as such; they would be delighted if he returned amongst them, for they say, "that it is Heaven who has placed him on the throne;" and thereupon they told me such stories about him, that I could scarcely credit them, for I am not given to believing in miracles. However, those who related them were trustworthy persons, who spoke from personal experience; and besides, they were confirmed by every one in the town, Catholics as well as Protestants.

They told me that when this Prince (who is now reigning in England), had attained his fourteenth year, he granted a general amnesty to those of his subjects who had conducted themselves criminally during his minority. This amnesty was proclaimed in the amphitheatre, which is situated in the centre of the town, and is a remarkable vestige of antiquity. A species of throne was erected there, and on it was

placed an effigy of the Prince, from whom the amnesty was supposed to emanate.

The people assembled round this, and just as the ceremony was about to commence, a crown was seen to descend, and to hover floating in the air at a short distance above the Prince's throne, where it remained for three hours. Every one shouted "Lo! a miracle!" and from that moment, not a soul ever doubted that their Prince would become a king.

The above is a fact that cannot be questioned, although it seems so marvellous, for it is well known to all, and was confirmed to me at Avignon, whither I returned a few days ago. I am now waiting, if you please, for you to tell me the reason of the disgrace[1] of the Archbishop of Cambrai. I am grieved about it, and I know him too well to suspect him of heresy. There must be something else beneath it which I cannot discover.

Adieu! I am always falling into the bad habit of writing too long letters, because I so much enjoy having a chat with you; but perhaps *you* do not enjoy it as much as *I* do, and are quite bored when you get to the end of such a lengthy epistle.—I remain, etc., etc.

[1] *See* note under Fénélon.—(*Trans.*)

LETTER VI

REPLY FROM HER FRIEND

Madame d'Urban—The Archbishop of Cambrai—Marriage of Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon—The Dauphin—The Princesse de Conti—The King desires to make Madame de Maintenon Queen—Père La Chaise opposes him successfully—Mortification of Madame de Maintenon—The Bishop of Meaux—The Duc de Bourgogne and his education—The Archbishop's book is suppressed—Monsieur Scarron's works—Dismissal of the actors of the "Comédie Italienne"—*The Sham Prude*—The address of the public courtesans of Paris—Madame Du Rhut.

PARIS.

MADAME,—Your letters never appear too long to me, so pray do not feel any more scruples on that point.

It seems to me that Madame d'Urban conquered *her* scruples very easily, and that she does not act up very well just *now* to her former standard of virtue! She has managed to put two husbands in a rage, when she need only have been a coquette, and thus have spread out *some* of her virtue over her second married state. It would have come to the same thing in the end; she would only have had to change the date; people may well say that our sex are preposterously changeable and contradictory! I will leave her now to her evil fate, and shall no longer

take any interest in her, although I cannot but pity her miserable condition.

I am horrified at the Chevalier's wickedness; people here have only learned half of it, and he is going about just as usual. I saw him at a masked ball on the very day I received your letter, and I mystified him greatly about Madame d'Urban, and the portrait which he nailed at the back of the post-chaise. He denied everything, for he would swear black was white, and I moved away before he found out who I was.

I perceive that you are very anxious about Monsieur de Cambrai, so I must tell you all about him. In order to do so, I must reveal a "mystery" which is known to very few people.

You know that it is thought here that the King has been long married to Madame de Maintenon; this seems probable from various signs, and from her open intimacy with Monseigneur, and with the Princesse de Conti.[1] In short, people say that she has for some time been most anxious to be declared Queen, and that she has quite persecuted the King about it. He resisted for a long time, but at last, in a moment of tenderness, he promised to consult with his Father Confessor about it. Madame de Maintenon thought everything was going on splendidly, and that Père La Chaise[2] would be only too delighted to have this opportunity of paying court to her; but he was far

[1] Wife of François Louis de Bourbon, Prince de Conti, brother of the Prince de Condé (*see* note 1, p. 18) and daughter of Madame Mancini, sister of the famous Cardinal de Mazarin.—(*Trans.*)

[2] François de la Chaise, a Jesuit Father, and confessor to Louis

too good a politician, and he knew well enough, that one cannot declare for one side, without being hated by the other; so, like the artful Jesuit he is, he managed to keep clear of the whole business, and told the King that he was not a sufficiently clever logician to decide on such an important matter; he then begged him to consult a person far more capable than himself, and whom he could recommend to him. The King was very undesirous of spreading his secret; but when Père La Chaise named Monsieur de Fénélon to him, he did not at all mind confiding in him, and told the Father to go and summon him.

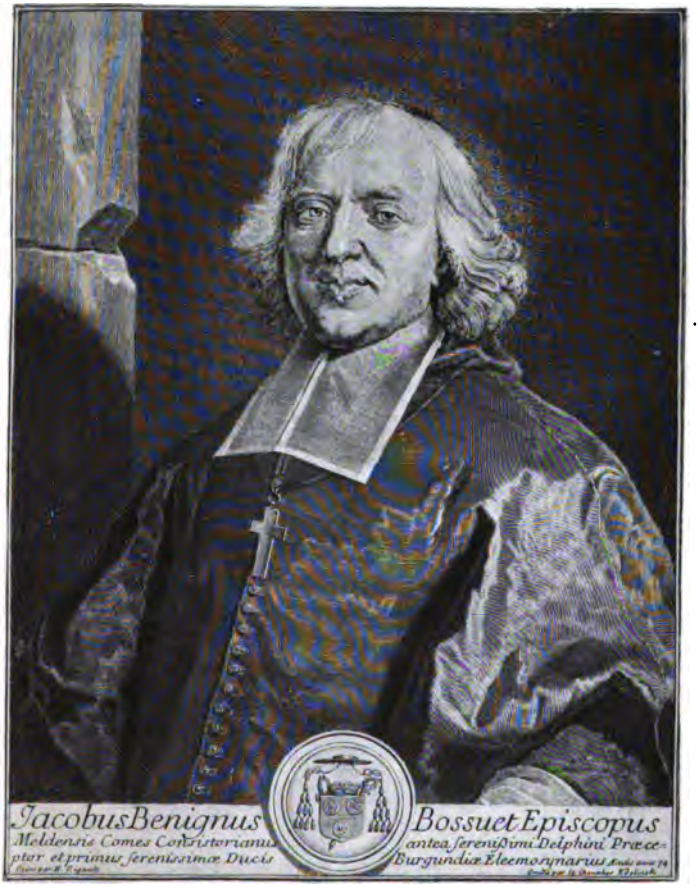
As soon as the Archbishop was informed of the matter, he was greatly upset, and said to the Jesuit: "What have I done to you, my Father, that you wish to ruin me? Well, no matter," he added, "let us go to the King."

He was awaiting them in his writing-closet.

The Prelate threw himself at his feet when he entered, and entreated him not to sacrifice him. The King promised, and then explained the case to him.

Then Monsieur de Fénélon, with his usual rectitude, represented to him what a wrong he would do to himself, were he to declare this marriage, and what serious consequences such a declaration would entail on him.

XIV. He was born at the Château d'Aix, at Forez, in 1624, and was the son of a private gentleman. He was a man of great learning and courtesy, and of a handsome, commanding figure. He died on 20th January 1709.—(*Trans.*)



LONDON: RICHARD BENTLEY & SON: 1890.

Thereupon the King endorsed the validity of his reasoning, and resolved to make no further move.

Madame de Maintenon did all in her power to persuade him, but he insisted to her that it was impossible. She asked him "if it were Père La Chaise who had overruled him?" The King held out for some time, before he would reveal to her who had done so; but at last, with inexcusable weakness, he related to her the whole thing, just as it had happened.

Madame de Maintenon concealed her rage, but determined on vengeance. She has already revenged herself on the Prelate, and the Jesuit will come in for his share, although he has only been guilty of the sin of omission.

She was puzzled for a long time as to how she should attack Monseigneur de Cambrai, who has never given any cause for blame. But at last the Bishop of Meaux,[1] who was angry with the King for not having entrusted him with the education of the Duc de Bourgogne, and for having preferred the Abbé de Fénélon to himself, obtained possession of a book in which the Prelate had written on "Love"; he thought by certain artful means to give an evil

[1] Jacques Bénigne Bossuet, born 1627, firstly Bishop of Condom, and in 1681 Bishop of Meaux. In 1695, he was made Superior of the College of Navarre. He was learned, dignified, haughty, self-conceited, and domineering, of pure life and respected character; but his remarkable talents as an orator and satirist caused him to be more feared than beloved. He was a bitter enemy to Fénélon, whom he persecuted with a jealous and unchristian virulence. Died in Paris, 12th April, 1704.—(*Trans.*)

interpretation to various expressions therein, which were no more forcible than those attributed to Saint Theresa, and many other saints revered by the Church.

He imparted this plan to Madame de Maintenon, who had confided her own scheme of revenge to him, and wished to carry it out. People are afraid that she will push the thing as far as she possibly can.

Monsieur de Cambrai is in his own diocese, where he is awaiting the upshot of all this, with the tranquillity that comes of a clear conscience. He is no longer tutor to the Princes.

Every relation he has in the army has been cashiered, and one of his brothers, who was in the navy, has been also dismissed.

The Jesuits are in expectation of the same sort of fate, and I cannot imagine how they are so impolitic as to have already commenced hostilities against her, for they are printing and selling at Lyon Scarron's works,[1] which Madame de Maintenon has been doing all she can to suppress. Perhaps they think that if they defy her, and make them-

[1] The principal works of Paul Scarron were a number of comedies, a tragi-comedy, the *Roman Comique*, "Le Virgile Travesti," and a quantity of satirical poems. He was born at Paris in 1610, married Mademoiselle d'Aubigné in 1651 (when she was only sixteen), and died in 1660, aged forty-nine. He lost the use of his limbs and became deformed in a strange manner; when Chanoine of Mans, he disguised himself as a savage during the carnival; but a troop of boys followed him, and persecuted him for so long, that he took refuge in a morass to hide himself. There he remained three or four hours, and the cold seized on him, and crippled and deformed him for life. (*Trans.*)

selves feared, she will dread them; but Madame de Maintenon is quite capable of humbling their pride.

The actors of the "Comédie Italienne" have also suffered from her bad humour; they have been dismissed for having played the *Sham Prude*,[1] because Madame de Maintenon is supposed to have recognised herself in the character. All Paris is regretting their loss, and it was feared, that the company of the Comédie Française and of the Opera would follow next, so much is the influence of our new Archbishop[2] in the ascendant. The public courtesans have shown their gratitude for this in a very effusive address which they have presented to him, as they fancy that they will have a great many more supporters, now that there are no theatres to amuse the myriads of idle folks in Paris; they have also presented him with a donation for the poor, but the address must have shown him how ridiculously he has acted. He has now relicensed the actors of the Comédie Française, and of the Opera, on condition of a tax levied on each seat for the benefit of the poor; it will be to the interest of the latter therefore, that as many persons as possible should patronise these two resorts; so our preachers will no longer dare to inveigh against them!

Adieu! You have mentioned in one of your letters to me, a fascinating woman called Madame Du Rhut; your description of her arouses my curiosity,

[1] *La Fausse Prude.*—(*Trans.*)
[2] François de Harlai—(*Trans.*)

and it seems to me that we have many others just now who resemble her; tell me who she is, whom you thus describe; I have no doubt that she is all you say, and that her story will be very entertaining. I hope you will relate it to me, and I, on my part, will tell you all that goes on here.—I remain, etc., etc.

LETTER VII

FROM MADAME DU NOYER TO HER FRIEND

The Archbishop of Cambrai—History of Madame Du Rhut—Her marriage—She attaches herself to the suite of the Duchesse de Mazarin—She leaves the Duchesse—Her intrigues with the Comte de Suze—The Comtesse de Suze, née Mademoiselle de Merinville—The Bishop of Viviers—The Comte de Suze leaves his wife—His scandalous conduct—The Comtesse goes to the Bishop of Viviers—Quarrels and reconciliations—Another break—Separate rooms—The Comtesse in a fury—A conflagration—Final separation—The Bishop worries the Comte—Creditors—In the toils of a wicked woman—The Comte de Suze and Madame Du Rhut set up house together—Empty house—Bare boards—Chicken on the floor!—The Comte wishes to return to his wife—Too late!—Fresh intrigues—Madame Du Rhut and Monsieur d'Arnoux—The Marquis de Seignelai—Monsieur de Saint Sauveur—Monsieur de Soissons—Madame d'Arnoux—The Doctor's prescription—A strange marriage—January and May—A superannuated lady-love—More intrigues—Another marriage—An infatuated man—"His dear wife."

AVIGNON.

MADAME,—The history of Monsieur de Cambrai has given me great pain; he deserved a better fate, but in fact, Madame, he suffered for justice' sake; for how could he have escaped, except by being less sincere? As you wish to know who Madame Du Rhut is, I will tell you about her as well as I can. This woman

has made herself notorious by her intrigues. She was married at Carpentras,[1] a little town belonging to Avignon situated on the river Sorgues. I do not think that she ever was handsome, at any rate her features show no vestige of it; however, she has inspired great passions, and has done the most extraordinary things in the world; her husband, who felt that she was far more talented than himself, allowed himself to be led by her, and blindly followed all she directed him to do.

When the King passed through Avignon, Madame Du Rhut, who wished to profit by her talents, attached herself to Madame de Mazarin,[2] whom all regarded as the future mistress of the Monarch; Madame de Mazarin took her with her to Court, and it is she who wrote the memoirs (*spurious, Trans.*) which appeared under that Duchess's name.

Madame Du Rhut had only followed her, to better her own fortunes, but left her when she found that her luck deserted her. She returned to her own province, and tried to fascinate the Comte de Suze. She succeeded in that, as she has in everything she has undertaken. The Comte had married Made-

[1] Carpentras, the ancient *Carpentoracte*, in the department of Vaucluse, formerly the county of Venaissin, Provence. It has a fine cathedral church, and once had a bishop, who was subservient to the Popes of Avignon.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Hortense, sister of Maria Mancini; they were the daughters of Count Mancini, and nieces of Cardinal Mazarin. Maria married the Constabile della Colonna. Louis XIV had been much in love with both of them in succession, and desired to marry Maria, but was prevented from doing so by political reasons. Hortense married the Duke of Mazarin.—(*Trans.*)

moiselle de Merinville,[1] a daughter of the governor of Narbonne,[2] and as he had always been the "tame cat" about the Court, he thought he need not take the trouble to love his wife, and so plunged himself instead over head and ears in intrigues. Madame Du Rhut was perfectly aware of all this, but did all she could to lead him on.

He had an uncle who exercised over him the authority of a father, viz. the Bishop of Viviers,[3] a prelate who was venerated for his age, and honoured for his virtues.

The Comtesse de Suze, who suffered deeply from her husband's infidelities, complained of him to Monsieur de Viviers, and the Bishop often reconciled them; but these reconciliations did not last long. The Comte was madly in love with Madame Du Rhut, and could not endure his wife, who resolved to separate from him.

She went to Viviers, and told the Bishop that she could bear it no longer, and that she wished to return to her father. The Bishop entreated her to remain for a few days with himself. This she did willingly, and whilst she was there, the Bishop sent for his nephew, who did not dare to refuse to go to him.

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[1] This is an error; his wife was Mademoiselle Henriette de Coligny.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Narbonne, the ancient *Narbo*, *Narbona*, *Narbo Martius*, of the Roman province of *Gallia Narbonensis*, in Languedoc.—(*Trans.*)

[3] Viviers (the ancient *Vivarium*), capital of Vivarais, on the Rhône, now forming the departments of Ardèche and Upper Loire. It possesses a fine cathedral. In former times the Bishop of Viviers had a temporal right to the title of Comte de Viviers, and Prince de Dousère et Châteauneuf.—(*Trans.*)

After having severely reprimanded him, he led him to his wife's apartments, and, as it was bed-time, left him there, and exhorted them both to forget the past, and turn over a new leaf in the future. The Comtesse was only too ready to do so; she was a kind-hearted woman, and loved her husband; but his sentiments towards *her* were far different, and, as he could not even endure her presence, he made some paltry excuse to the *Maître d'Hôtel*, and got him to give him another bedroom.

At this juncture the Comtesse lost all patience; her love changed into fury. She took a light, and entering the room where her faithless husband was sleeping, set fire to the bed. The Comte awoke only just in time not to be roasted alive, and all the household in the Episcopal palace was soon aroused, and on the alert to arrest the progress of the fire.

The Bishop was the first to awake, and was surprised at the conflagration; when he was told the cause of it, he blamed the Comtesse for her rash deed, and the Comte still more for being the reason of it; then, recognising perfectly that there was no further hope of reconciliation, he gave his consent to the Comtesse to go to her parents. But, in order to punish his nephew, and to rescue him from the toils into which he had fallen, he did everything he could to worry him out of them; he sent for his creditors, who seized all his property, and even his furniture, not even leaving him a knife for the use of his table!

The Bishop imagined that this would bring him

to his senses, but he was mistaken, Madame Du Rhut ruled over him with absolute sway; but, at the same time, she did not forget her personal interests, and filling up some blank drafts that she had wheedled out of the Comte, with such sums as suited her fancy, *she* also appeared on the scene as a creditor, and seized on an estate worth fifty thousand écus.

She was crafty enough to persuade the Comte that she did so to secure it for him, and to throw dust in the eyes of her husband, who, she said, was beginning to be suspicious about their connection with each other.

The Comte fell into the trap, and actually pleaded with the judges in favour of Madame Du Rhut against himself!

Then people began to think that she must be a sorceress; for, although she had despoiled the Comte of everything, he thought himself perfectly happy when with her, and he might often have been seen within the four walls of his empty house, sitting with her, in Oriental fashion, before a handkerchief spread on the floor, dining off a chicken for which he had sent out! She persuaded him that she thought that life with him, even in a desert, would be delightful to her. All the same, she took care to keep a tight hold on the property she had gained. Her husband was charmed at this new acquisition, and troubled himself very little as to what the outside world thought about the affair; as for the Comte, he seemed to take actual pleasure in his own dispolia-

tion, so much was he bewitched by this woman! I really think that he would have remained so all his life, if she had not herself deserted him, after having got all she could out of him, in the way I have just narrated to you.

The Comte then realised what a mistake he had made, but it was too late to mend matters; he wrote to his wife, but she would not return to him; then, as his only son was dead, he made over all his wealth to his brother's children, and also passed over the entail to them, upon which, they, by the advice of the Bishop of Viviers (who was guardian to all the family), undertook to pay him annually sixteen thousand livres. With this allowance he sets up for a dandy, and makes a great show here.

All this time, however, Madame Du Rhut was still fortune-hunting, and after looking round about her in every quarter, bethought herself that she could not do better than entrap Monsieur d'Arnoux, who was very wealthy, and an intimate friend of Monsieur Colbert.[1] Monsieur d'Arnoux had a very

[1] Jean Baptiste Colbert, Marquis de Seignelai, born, according to some authorities, at Rheims, according to others, at Paris, on the 29th August 1619. He was the son of Nicholas Colbert, Seigneur de Vandière. The family came originally from Scotland. He owed his preferment to Cardinal Mazarin, and to his own remarkable financial and architectural talents. By his careful supervision the French navy took a rank it had never known previously in the annals of France. He was a man of forbidding appearance, but of unimpeachable honesty and indefatigable industry. His face was long and thin, the eyes sunken, and with bushy eyebrows beetling over them, his manners taciturn, cold, and austere; he was perhaps too much addicted to flattering his Royal Master, and was jealous and despotic, but as he only used his flattery to work upon the King for judicious measures, this failing may be forgiven him. After cruel

old and infirm wife and two children, a son who had been educated with the Marquis de Seignelai,[1] and a daughter at a convent. Madame Du Rhut reigned absolute mistress in the house, and, according to public opinion, in the heart of Monsieur d'Arnoux.

I do not know how it was, but old Madame d'Arnoux took no umbrage at it, and Madame Du Rhut managed to make herself so indispensable to the old lady, that she could not do without her. This connection lasted for some time without any complications, but just when it was the least expected, Monsieur d'Arnoux died.

Madame Du Rhut, who knew how to turn everything to her own advantage, considered how she might profit by his death, although it might have been imagined that it was most unfortunate for her; this is how she managed. She had two sons, the elder of whom she styled Monsieur de Saint Sauveur, and the younger Monsieur de Soissons. Madame d'Arnoux was at the point of death, but she was anxious to put off this catastrophe as long as possible, and always had a doctor dancing attend-

sufferings from the stone, he died on the 6th September 1683, leaving six sons and three daughters, all married to personages of high rank and wealth. His eldest son, also named Jean Baptiste, became even more celebrated than himself as a statesman and ambassador. It is probable that at the time at which Madame du Noyer writes, the elder Colbert was in Provence, superintending the progress of his great work, the Canal of Languedoc.—(*Trans.*)

[1] Jean Baptiste Colbert (junior), Marquis de Seignelai, called in the lifetime of his father Marquis de Torci, born 1665, died in Paris 2d September 1746. Was Minister of Marine, and ambassador successively to Portugal, Denmark, and England; Secretary of State, 1686; Director-General of Ports, 1699; and Conseiller de la Régence during the minority of Louis XV.—(*Trans.*)

ance upon her who, whilst amusing her, enriched himself, for she was rolling in wealth, and her husband had left her entire control of her children's inheritance.

Madame Du Rhut took it into her head to win over the doctor, which was an easy matter; and she induced him to persuade Madame d'Arnoux, that, in order to cure her malady and delay her death, she must get married, and that she ought to marry a healthy and robust young man, with the assurance that this young man would draw her malady out of her, and communicate to her his own good health. He supported his arguments by various reasonings extracted from Galen[1] and Hippocrates,[2] and he

[1] Claudius Galen, a celebrated physician of Pergamus in Asia Minor. He was the son of Nicon, an architect, and was born in the reigns of Claudian and Adrian, in the year A.D. 103. After travelling to Smyrna, Corinth, and Alexandria, he returned to Pergamus in his twenty-eighth year, and was appointed surgeon to the gladiators. When he was thirty-three he went to Rome, but returned four years after to Pergamus. His medical works to this day are highly esteemed for their philosophical reasoning and subtle and logical research. The principal are those entitled, *De Facultatibus Naturalibus*, *De Motu Musculorum*, *De Fœtuum Formatione*, *De Pulsum Differentiis*, *De Temperamentis*, *De Differentiis et Causis Morborum*, *Methodus Medendi*, and *De Locis Affectis*. He wrote altogether two hundred different works, and died in the ninetieth year of his age, about A.D. 193.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Hippocrates, a celebrated Greek physician, styled "the father of medicine" and "the prince of physicians." Born B.C. 357 in the island of Cos, died in the 3rd century B.C. He was the son of Heraclides, a physician, lineally descended of a direct and unbroken line of physicians from Esculapius. His mother was descended from the hero Hercules. He passed most of his life in travelling and teaching medicine. He left two sons, Thessalus and Draco, both eminent physicians. It is supposed that he died at a great age at Larissa, in Thessaly. His principal works are, *Epidemicorum; Prognosticon; Aphorismi; De Aeribus, Aquis et Locis; De Articulis et Fracturis; De Capitis Vulneribus.*—(*Trans.*)

was arguing the matter with her when Madame Du Rhut entered the bedroom.

"Ah, madame!" said Madame d'Arnoux, after inviting her to sit down, "can you guess what remedy monsieur has just prescribed for me?"

"I do not know, madame," replied Madame Du Rhut coldly; "but I hope that it will restore to you your health, which is quite as precious to me as my own."

"When you hear what the remedy is," replied the old lady, "you will see that it is not likely to suit me very well."

"Indeed! why not?" asked Madame Du Rhut; "what may this grand remedy be?"

"Why!" replied Madame d'Arnoux, "that I must be married again, and to a young man. Just think to what I should expose myself, and what everybody would say to such a thing, even though it should be necessary to my health, which I am not very sure about."

"Madame," said Madame Du Rhut, "I expected to hear of some remedy much more difficult to obtain. I do not see any difficulty in *that*, nor why you should be so nervous about it; the circumstances attending it ought not to be very disagreeable to you, and the youth of a husband is not a very great defect."

"What!" exclaimed Madame d'Arnoux, "you agree with him about it, and *you* advise me also, that I, who have lived honourably in the world, should draw upon myself public censure, and expose

myself to the contempt of some young reprobate, who would only marry me in order to live in debauchery, and would have no regard for my health. It would be madness to lay oneself open to such a thing; at my age, I cannot pretend that it would be for *love*. I should be scoffed at if I were capable of going through such a performance, just to prolong a life which cannot have many years in store for it; it is not worth the risk, for so slight a thing, to give a bad opinion of myself, and tarnish my reputation."

"Madame," replied Madame Du Rhut, "it is not for me to offer you advice on such a subject. As regards the effects of the remedy, monsieur ought to understand his profession," she added, turning to the doctor; "and you, madame, must know enough of him to judge if you can depend upon him. Besides, people don't think so much nowadays of the honour of their memory, and we laugh at those stupid persons who would rather die in order to immortalise their names. Allow me, madame, to tell you that you will be rather like them, for it is really homicidal to neglect the care of one's life, and I am quite certain that you cannot do so conscientiously. Sensible people, who will understand your reasons, will take good care not to blame you for so doing, and you ought to be quite indifferent to the opinion of those who are not so. Society puts no spy over your actions, and the rank you hold places you above all regard for such considerations. I confess that your other reason appears to me the stronger of the two, but I should be surprised if you fell into bad

hands; honest people are rare, but one can find them if one searches. If there is only *this* difficulty to encounter, it can be easily overcome, for I can offer you my own son, who is all that the doctor advises, and who would follow all his suggestions with care, in order to restore a health that is so precious for so many reasons. He is an honest and pious fellow, and that should be sufficient guarantee to you for everything. You see, madame, I do not advise you; I merely offer you all I have to offer, and all that I hold most dear."

The doctor then promised her all but immortality in favour of the matter, and threatened to give up his attendance on her if she refused.

The good lady was nearly won over, when her confessor entered: he was a Jesuit, and in the conspiracy; as soon as he came in, he asked what was the subject of such a lively discussion. He was told what it was all about, as had been previously planned.

The father insisted to Madame d'Arnoux that it was a point of conscience, and told her that he could not grant her absolution if she refused the legitimate means offered to her to prolong her life, and entreated Madame Du Rhut to send for her son.

He was soon found, for he had received orders not to be far off; he threw himself at the feet of his superannuated old "lady-love," kissed her hands tenderly, swore that they were the most beautiful in all the world, and declared that his devotion would submit to every ordeal. Madame d'Arnoux clung to

life; she thought the means for preserving it were very charming, especially as heaven and earth combined in her favour; so she consented to everything; and, as in Avignon the Council of Trent is obeyed on all points, and as mere consent may constitute marriage, no further ceremony was made of the matter than the confessor's immediate benediction, following on a little paper that he had made her sign in favour of a legacy to her lover, telling her that she could not in pure conscience leave unrewarded a man who thus sacrificed his youth to her service, and that she could not leave it to the discretion of her children hereafter. He did not forget, either, a legacy to his own convent to say masses for her, and all being said and done, he left the cavalier with her to finish the rest!

The doctor went out with Madame Du Rhut, who paid him then and there what had been agreed upon between them, after which they went to the apartments of Monsieur d'Arnoux, who was quite unconscious of what had just taken place at his mother's house.

After a little preamble, Madame Du Rhut told him about it; he was astonished, and flew into a violent passion.

"Leave this place!" he cried to her, "you Megara,[1] you sorceress! you bewitched my father all his life, and now you have come here and bewitched

[1] Megara, in mythological history a sorceress, and wife of Hercules, whom he killed with her three children, on account of her infidelity to himself.—(*Trans.*)

my mother. You deserve to be burnt alive! I shall use all my interest to have you arrested for this."

"Enough, monsieur!" replied Madame Du Rhut, quite calmly; "if you will stop talking, I will tell you which is the greatest of my crimes, and which you do not yet know. I love you, monsieur; you have always been the object of my deepest passion, in spite of the difference in our ages, and of your indifference to me. Although my reason combated my inclination, I could not resist it, that is why I attached myself to your family; your father loved me, but I only made use of the power I had obtained over him to be of good service to you; you know that, sir; but amidst all that I have done for you, there is nothing which merits your gratitude more than the very thing about which you are in such a rage. You know that your mother brought immense wealth into your family, and that your father left her entire control of it; you know also how she clings to life. Her doctor, who is in the pay of a certain person, had persuaded her to marry, and she had fixed upon a choice which would have ruined you; fortunately I arrived in the nick of time before the bargain was complete, and although I could not dissuade her from marrying, I at least deterred her from taking the Comte de ——, who would soon have squandered your wealth, and I therefore sacrificed my own son to your interests; he will act exactly as I wish, or rather, as *you* wish, for you can use him as a tool to bias your

mother's mind in your favour. There! monsieur, there is what I, the Megara, the sorceress, have done for you, and this is all the reward I get from you!"

So saying, she rose and left him, so overcome with surprise at all he had just heard that he knew not what to say. As he was a kind-hearted man, he ran after her. "Come back! generous creature, come back!" he cried to her loudly.

"No," replied Madame Du Rhut, "I have already told you so much that I do not wish to prolong the conversation. I will leave you to repent."

Poor Monsieur d'Arnoux was a long time before he could make his peace with her. At last, when she thought that she had held out long enough, she allowed herself to be appeased. In spite of all this, the remedy to which Madame d'Arnoux had had recourse did not take effect, and the good old lady sank daily. Madame Du Rhut redoubled her attentions; the husband was not behindhand in his, and each worked towards their own ends.

At last Madame Du Rhut, with her son's help, found means to marry Monsieur de Soissons, her younger son, to Mademoiselle d'Arnoux; and as she had still a great deal of influence over the brother of the latter, she persuaded him that his mother was determined to make Mademoiselle d'Arnoux her heiress, and to marry her to a certain man of rank, whom she named. She told him that her son, who was ever watching over his interests, had discovered this secret, and had confided it to her, and that the only way to avert this step was to marry Made-

moiselle d'Arnoux to Monsieur de Soissons, her younger son.

Monsieur d'Arnoux was alarmed at the thought of losing such a splendid inheritance, and consented to everything. So Monsieur de Soissons married the young lady, and was made a captain in the navy, through the interest of his brother-in-law, who was Intendant of the Marine.

After this poor Madame d'Arnoux was no longer necessary to Madame Du Rhut in her machinations, and she was allowed to die, whilst Monsieur de Saint Sauveur found himself very comfortably off with the fortune she left him, and married afterwards to please himself. Monsieur Du Rhut also died just then, most conveniently, and his wife, who found the house of Monsieur d'Arnoux extremely comfortable, and who had acquired absolute power over this man, resolved to marry him.

Monsieur d'Arnoux had been educated with Monsieur de Seignelai, and had the misfortune to be hated by him, because, during their childhood, Monsieur de Colbert had always held him up as an example to his son; so much so that after the death of Monsieur de Colbert, Monsieur d'Arnoux was afraid that some of the fortune he had left him might be diverted from him; but the justice of Monsieur de Seignelai guaranteed him from this, for he was persuaded that Monsieur d'Arnoux had done his duty. Some time after the death of Monsieur de Colbert, Monsieur d'Arnoux was requested by Monsieur de Seignelai to call on him. He showed this request

to Madame Du Rhut, whom he consulted about everything, and she told him to have no hesitation about it, but to go and see the Minister.

"But, monsieur," she said to him, "as he has never had any liking for you, he may wish to stand in your good graces by marrying you to one of his mistresses; if you refuse to do so, you will make an enemy of him, and you know his temper; and on the other hand, if you do so, you are certain to make an unhappy marriage."

"I foresee all these misfortunes," replied Monsieur d'Arnoux; "but how am I to prevent them?"

"There is nothing easier," answered Madame Du Rhut; "marry *me*, and when Monsieur de Seignelai suggests to you to marry, tell him you are so already; and our marriage, which will not upset your usual manner of living, will protect you from some ill turn. You know that I have long loved you; all my conduct must have shown you that sufficiently; you have not hitherto come to any harm by following my advice; believe me, and do not neglect it now, for it is in *your* interests alone that I give it to you, and my tenderness for you has never let me consult my own. I will never thwart you; you shall have your mistresses, and you can live as a bachelor; I will even give you a dispensation from all conjugal rights if you show the slightest repugnance to them; and you will only be obliged to remember that you have a wife when you are asked to marry some one else!"

"Ah! madame," replied Monsieur d'Arnoux, "is it possible that I could feel any repugnance to such a woman as yourself? No! you have even triumphed over that which I have always felt for marriage itself, and which was the only reason that prevented my offering you my little fortune; since the death of Monsieur Du Rhut I have been reflecting that we could pass our lives together without entering into any more binding engagement; but I see now that I should thereby be deprived of many pleasures, and that I can only be perfectly happy if I give myself up entirely to you; only too happy if you will but accept me, and show me the tenderness which I have never merited, and which you have so generously evinced towards me. Come, madame, come, and let us thereby sanction all you have done for me!"

"Although my own desires move me to do the same," answered Madame Du Rhut, "I should never do so did I not see that it is to your advantage; and you will thus perceive, monsieur, that I am the third victim immolated for your interests."

"Yes, madame," replied the grateful Monsieur d'Arnoux, "I shall bear in remembrance all my life that I owe you everything, and you shall see how long my gratitude will endure!"

After that he sent for a priest, who married them privately, and a few days after he departed and went to see Monsieur de Seignelai, quite in despair at parting from his beloved spouse, who is over sixty years of age!

Monsieur de Seignelai was utterly astonished at this extraordinary marriage. He no longer doubted that Madame Du Rhut was a sorceress, for all that the Parliament of Paris say of her; and Monsieur d'Arnoux, after having received the Minister's commands, returned to his dear wife, more in love than *Amadis of Gaul*;[1] and although they have now lived together several years, he has not changed; he is always joking with her, and hugging her in his arms; in fact, he has the most extraordinary passion for her.

What I find the most wonderful thing, in all the wonderful life of Madame Du Rhut, is, that she was capable of inspiring so much adoration and constancy at an age when one only inspires repulsion. It is the second example[2] which our century furnishes us, and I doubt whether a third will ever present itself.

Finally, Madame Du Rhut has turned very devout; she has founded a monastery on a mountain near Carpentras: it is arranged like cells for hermits. She has also established other institutions; and as she has a great many friends and plenty of credit, she dispenses charity to a great many persons. Both her sons are well settled: the younger will inherit all the wealth of Monsieur

[1] Amadis of Gaul, the hero of a medieval romance. The title of the work is *The Renowned Romance of Amadis of Gaul*, by Vasco Lobeira. A translation of it was made by Southey from the Spanish version of Garciodonez de Montalva, in three vols.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Madame Du Noyer no doubt alludes here to the influence of Madame de Maintenon over Louis XIV.—(*Trans.*)

d'Arnoux, whose sister he married; and the elder is well content with what old Madame d'Arnoux bequeathed him.

Public opinion is divided on the subject of Madame Du Rhut, now styled the *Intendante d'Arnoux.*

Some think her a sorceress, others a saint; as for me, I consider her neither one nor the other, but merely a shrewd and crafty woman backed up by Fortune. *You* are free to form any opinion you please!

Last of all, if you come from Paris, you are supposed to know the latest novelties; the ladies of this place are very inquisitive; they will not let you off with only teaching them the last new airs, or in discussing *Fontanges*[1] or *Falbalas*[2]: they want to know about everything that goes on at Court, and imagine that you have only just had a peep at it, unless you reveal the ins and outs of every intrigue. As I am well posted up in *that* subject, they have hitherto been very content with me; I told them all I knew, and I have at last exhausted it all.

I was reading one of your letters the other day to a lady, and she told me that she had heard of the Marquis de Lassé, whom you mentioned, and begged

[1] "Fontanges" were coquettish caps or hoods, called after the king's former mistress, Marie Angélique, Duchesse de Fontanges. The term was also sometimes applied to bows and rosettes of ribbon.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Falbalas were the gathered or kilted flounces, introduced by the milliners of the period as a novelty in trimming the edges of ladies' skirts, trains, and sleeves, made either of lace or of the same material as the dress.—(*Trans.*)

me to tell her all his adventures, which made a great sensation in society. I told her, what was true, that I knew nothing very clear about him, but I promised to ask you to relate his history to me more fully. She and I both hope that you will have the kindness to do so. I will not boast of mine, in writing you such a long letter, for I have so much need of yours, in asking you to read it through!

Adieu! tell me everything that goes on regarding that business about Monsieur de Cambrai, and all the mistakes that the Archbishop of Paris will make by his senseless over-zeal: for, as the song says:

"*Tout Noailles est imbécile*!"[1]—I remain, etc.

[1] At the time at which Madame Du Noyer writes, the De Noailles brothers were very unpopular with the king and people from party jealousy, and on account of their overbearing extravagance and ostentation, and they were made the frequent subject of satirical ballads by a gentleman of the Court named Monsieur de Cabanac.—(*Trans.*)

LETTER VIII

REPLY FROM HER FRIEND

Madame Du Rhut—The Marquis de Lassé—His handsome face and fortune—He leaves the Huguenot faith and turns Catholic "to be in the fashion"—Marie-Anne, the pretty washerwoman—Her beauty and virtues—She refuses the Duc de Lorraine—The Marquis de Lassé proposes—Marie-Anne says "No!"—Marie-Anne's lecture on matrimony—She goes into a convent—The broken-hearted Marquis—Marie-Anne makes up a match for him—Temporary consolation—The Marquise dies—A second proposal—Marie-Anne says "Yes!"—Another lecture on matrimony—A good beginning with a bad ending—The Marquis is bored—Separation—Marie-Anne breaks out into verse—Paris is too attractive—A faithless husband—Marie-Anne dies of disappointed love—The Marquis's remorse—Pricks of conscience—Easily consoled—Marries again—The Comtesse de Mare—The Maréchal de Grancey—The Comte de Bussi—Squabbles in the Church—The book *Telemachus*—Its suppression—Its supposed personalities.

PARIS.

MADAME,—I am deeply sensible of all I owe to your kindness. The history of Madame Du Rhut is so extraordinary that if I had heard it from any one but yourself I should have thought it was a romance. I think that this woman is very like the heroines of the romances of our days, but it would be unsafe to push the comparison too far, and there are certain people about whom it is best not to gossip. You

may depend upon me to satisfy the curiosity of your lady-friends, and I shall begin by gratifying them with the story of the Marquis de Lassé.

You have seen him, so you are aware that he is very handsome, and has an engaging manner. He left his own province in early youth, in order "to make a figure" in Paris; he lived very expensively there, gave himself great airs, and thereby squandered away much of his property. He was moreover ambitious, and as he thought that the Protestant religion, in which he had been brought up, might stand in the way of his fortune, he turned Catholic in order to be in the fashion. His conversion procured him many friends, and he was on the high road to prosperity when—he fell in love: the *she* who made this splendid conquest was a washerwoman named Marie-Anne. She was a very clever girl, as well as a beautiful one, and witty, and kind-hearted; in short, nothing was wanting but birth and fortune to make her a very desirable person.

The old Duc de Lorraine[1] had wished to marry her, but she declined to be elevated to this rank, as she did not consider herself worthy of it, and feared that she would not be able to act up to it suitably. Every one praised her prudence and her diffidence,

[1] This was probably Henri de Lorraine, commonly called the fifth Duc de Guise et Lorraine, born 1614, died 2d June 1664, after four years' imprisonment in Spain. He was a brave general, but a profligate and intriguing man. After a disgraceful *liaison* with the Comtesse de Bossut, he married her secretly, then cruelly deserted her, and tried to divorce her, but failed. He had originally been brought up to the Church, but, on the death of his brother, became heir to the title, and relinquished the clerical profession.—(*Trans.*)

and Monsieur de Lassé, who was passionately in love with her, proposed to her at once; but he was greatly surprised when she refused him modestly. She was too virtuous for any one to suspect her capable of accepting any other conditions of union; thus Monsieur de Lassé found himself placed in a very embarrassing position. "What! Mademoiselle!" he exclaimed one day to her, "you refuse to accept me; does my personal appearance displease you? Is not my fortune large enough for you? There is no question at issue for *us*, of State or political reasons; I am only a nobleman, not a prince; and apart from that, your virtues quite compensate for your want of gentle birth, the latter is not indispensable to a woman; there have been many dukes and peers and marshals in France who have married girls of no better birth than yourself, and who certainly were your inferiors. In short, I am my own master; I have enough wealth to make you happy, and to furnish you with all that fortune did not bestow on you, why, therefore, do you cast me off? What can I do to satisfy you?"

"You have done everything, monsieur," replied Marie-Anne; "you *do* please me, I esteem you, and I should think myself the happiest creature in the world if united to you, but I will not gain my own happiness at the expense of yours. I refused the proposal of the Duc de Lorraine, for whom I felt no respect excepting that due to his rank. Would you wish me to show less consideration for you, or be a drag on the prosperity of a man such as you are, who, if I may

venture to declare it, are dearer to me than all the world beside. No! monsieur, I am not suitable for you, your love makes you think all things possible, but mine is not so blind: your family is wealthy, but you must make a rich marriage to keep it up, and I should bring you neither an advantageous connection nor wealth. You would live to repent it, and that would make me miserable, for I should not like to entail all that upon you: all I will ask of you is to be remembered with esteem, and I shall try to deserve it by never taking advantage of the kindness you have shown me. After the confession I have made you, you see that I must not consult my own heart; so, monsieur, I entreat you to be generous also, on your side, and refrain from coming to see me." Monsieur de Lassé did all he could to dissuade her, but he did not succeed; and although he was in despair at the decision at which Marie-Anne had arrived, he could not help admiring her for it. She avoided carefully all opportunities of meeting him, and, in order to do so more strictly, retired to a convent. For three months Monsieur de Lassé saw nothing of her, when he received a note from her, begging him to come to her immediately on a matter of pressing importance. He lost not a moment, and hastened to the convent with the speed of a man passionately in love, in the hope of finding that his charmer reciprocated his own sentiments; but she was far more disinterested than himself. As soon as he arrived she asked him if he still loved her? but when he broke into passionate protestations she

interrupted his transports, and told him that it was by deeds and not by words that she desired to have it manifested to her. Then when he swore to undertake the most difficult performances in her service, even so far as "bringing her the moon," she made him promise that he would marry an extremely wealthy lady whom she had won for him, through the intervention of some of the nuns.

Monsieur de Lassé rejected the proposal; the love in his heart fought against his interests, but Marie-Anne used her influence with the Marquis to such good effect that the marriage came off as she had wished.

The Marquis took his wife off to his estates, and patched up his debts with the enormous wealth she brought him.

A whole year passed thus, without his daring to infringe her (Marie-Anne's) commands against writing to her. When Madame de Lassé died, the Marquis (who had never felt for her anything but the respect which every honest man *should* feel for his wife) did not even follow her to her grave; but after a decent time had elapsed he came again and cast at the feet of Marie-Anne his heart, and the fortune which her interest in him had so increased.

Marie-Anne again drew back, but at last the love she felt for Monsieur de Lassé carried the day. He owed to her all the wealth he had inherited from his first wife. She could not thus make any scruples about not having any herself, nor any excuses of poverty; but she still hesitated, and when he pressed

her to complete his happiness, could not help making certain conditions.

"Did I love you less," she said, "I should only perceive the advantages you offer me; but, monsieur, that is not enough for me, my happiness depends upon being loved by you. I really believe now that you do so, and I should be ungrateful were I to doubt it; but who can answer for the future? Everything fades, and I love you so fondly, that were you to love me less I should die. Judge then, monsieur, whether you will be able to put up with a wife who, if she devotes herself entirely to you, would wish you to be hers, and hers only, but fears that it would be impossible for you to be so in the dissipations of such an immoral Court as ours. This proposal of mine will alarm you, it is the same as the misanthrope made to his mistress; but, monsieur, you must make up your mind to pass your life peacefully with me on your estates, or else renounce all thoughts of me for ever."

The amorous Marquis consented to everything, and won his charming Marie-Anne. Then they betook themselves to country life and happiness together. Marie-Anne thought it all perfect, and would not have changed places with the greatest queen in the universe.

But the Marquis soon grew weary of this simple life, and invented the excuse of a lawsuit as a pretext for going off to Paris. Marie-Anne felt the parting deeply. Some presentiment warned her that some misfortune would come of it.

The Marquis tried to comfort her by the tender-

ness of his farewell, and departed, highly delighted at returning to Court.

As soon as he arrived in Paris he thought a great deal more of his pleasures than of his lawsuit. At first he wrote to her regularly, but gradually slipped out of the habit. Marie-Anne complained to him tenderly about it, and in her melancholy composed "Bouts-rimés," which she sent to the Marquis, and which I can also send to you, as I know them by heart. The rhymes are not difficult to make; Madames Des-Houlières strung them together once before in praise of the Duc de Saint Aignan.[1] They are as follows:

"Je vous aime, Tyrcis, je l'atteste OMNIBUS.
Vous n'en faites pas tant, et c'est ce qui me fâche;
Faut-il que votre ardeur chaque jour se relâche,
Quand elle a de mes feux exigé les TRIBUS?
Qui peut vous inspirer un sentiment si LÂCHE?
Que ne suis-je Daphné? Que n'êtes-vous PHEBUS?
De quoi me sert mon rang, mon crédit, mon QUIBUS,
S'il faut que loin de vous, mon frein içi je MÂCHE?
Vous ne m'écrivez plus, c'est un terrible ITEM.
Vous ne revenez point, voilà le TU AUTEM.
Des peines de l'amour l'absence en est la PIRE,
Vous à qui cet ingrat osera dire AMO,
Ne vous y fiez pas, lise qui voudra LIRE.
Ce conseil que j'écris, experto CALAMO."[2]

[1] François Honorât de Beauvilliers, Duc de Saint Aignan, soldier, courtier, and poet, born 1607, died 16th June 1687. He took his title from St. Aignan or Agnan, on the river Cher, in Berry, formerly a countship, but raised to a dukedom, and bestowed on him for his services to the King as gentleman of the bedchamber and governor of Havre de Grâce.—(*Trans.*)

[2] As the rhymes, or *bouts-rimés*, would lose their point if translated, it has been deemed advisable to give the poem in the original.—(*Trans.*)

However, neither the poetry nor the prose of his wife touched the Marquis, for she soon learned by rumour that her husband was leading a very irregular life in Paris.

She was so grieved at this that, as she had clearly foreseen, all her courage deserted her; her heart broke, and she died for love of the most ungrateful of men.

The Marquis received this intelligence just when he least expected it, and the remorse he felt at having caused the death of so virtuous a woman revived all the tenderness he had once felt for her, and threw him into despair. He shut himself up in a monastery, and thought of turning Trappist; but as "nothing violent lasts long," he consoled himself, and returned to Court more brilliant than ever, and married a natural daughter of *Monsieur le Prince.*[1] It is not known who is her mother, but it is believed that it is the Comtesse de Mare, a daughter of the Maréchal de Grancey. I refer you for her genealogy to the Comte de Bussi, who has written of the amours of Monsieur le Prince and Madame de Mare.

There, madame! that is all I know about it, and it is on account of this rather left-handed brotherhood that the Marquis de Lassé is associated with the Duke in his dissipations, and also why the Duchess suspects him of pandering to some that are detrimental to herself.

Our Archbishop goes on in his own way. He

[1] The Duc de Bourgogne.—(*Trans.*)

has allied himself to Monsieur de Meaux,[1] in order to help Madame de Maintenon in her revenge: he is also taken up with writing against the Archbishop of Cambrai,[2] whom they blame now for having written a book entitled *Telemachus*, in which he is accused of censuring the Government.

The book is suppressed, but its suppression only makes a better sale for it, everybody wants to have it, and it is one of the best things that has ever been written. It is on the model of the *Odyssey* of Homer, and people say that this volume is a collection of essays he (Fénélon) wrote for the Duc de Bourgogne. He desired to give this prince, who is born to the throne, the example of a benign government; and as the present one cannot be considered as such, it is thought that the prelate has thus covertly aimed a critique at it.

It would be far better if they *would* profit by the advice he makes Mentor give to the son of Ulysses, that is, through the goddess Minerva transformed into a man. The book is very clever, and agreeable and instructive. I daresay you will soon see it

[1] Jacques Bénigne Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux.—(*Trans.*)

[2] François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénélon, Archbishop of Cambrai. Louis XIV was extremely wroth at the publication of *Telemachus*, and did all he could to suppress the book, but in vain, as it was translated into all the languages of Europe in a very short of time after its appearance. The King imagined that in the various characters of the book he saw himself in Sesostris, the Marquise de Montespan in Calypso, Mademoiselle de Fontanges in Eucharis, the Duchesse de Bourgogne in Antiope, the Duc de Louvois in Protesilaus and King James II of England in Idomeneus. And all Fénélon's asseverations to the contrary would never persuade him that he was labouring under a delusion.—(*Trans.*)

(if you have not already done so), and that you will be very pleased with it.

Adieu! Pray let us persevere in our correspondence. I will not make any apologies for the length of my letter, for the history of Monsieur de Lassé quite filled it up!—I remain, etc.

LETTER IX

FROM MADAME DU NOYER TO HER FRIEND

Monsieur de Lassé and Marie-Anne—Madame d'Urban—Bagnoles—The lady turns over a new leaf—Reconciliation—The Commendatore Maldachini—A family meeting—Father and uncle—Monsieur de Ganges—"La belle Gevaudan"—Cardinal de Bonzi—Monsieur de Baville—A dangerous father-in-law—A Marquise in difficulties—"Betwixt two stools"—The Baron de Moisac—The Marquis de Ganges breaks his parole—He is outlawed—Monsieur de Phélypeaux—The Marquis des Essarts—A lordly toady—The boating party—Unpleasant consequences—Unkind friends—How Monsieur de Phélypeaux lost his eye—How it was replaced—The Comte de Broglie's fête—Blood-shedding and money-getting—The Comtesse de Ganges—Madame de Maintenon.

AVIGNON.

MADAME,—I am very much obliged to you for the history of Monsieur de Lassé; our ladies read it with pleasure.

We pitied the fate of the incomparable Marie-Anne, and blamed the Marquis's conduct greatly. I may as well tell you, by way of news, that Madame d'Urban has returned; she went first to stay at Bagnoles[1] with a relation of her husband's, the

[1] Bagnoles, a village near Domfront, department of Orne, France; celebrated for its saline springs and cold ferruginous baths.—(*Trans.*)

same who had refused to ask for a *Lettre de Cachet* ordering her imprisonment. She was received at this relation's house, and as no objection was made to this, all the others made no difficulties about receiving her, and her husband, who still loves her, encouraged by the example of his family, went to Bagnoles to fetch her, and brought her home again. The past was not to be reverted to. Madame d'Urban gave her husband excellent reasons for her journey, at least he received them as such, and they seem now on perfectly good terms. She does not trouble herself as to what gossip says, and whether it be from consideration for Monsieur d'Urban, or from feelings of delicacy, no one breathes a word against her; it seems as if the Rhône were transformed into the river Lethe, and as if every one in Avignon had lost their memory! The other day I went to the garden of the Commendatore Maldachini, which is just like the house of Polemon, of which we read in *Cassandra*, a regular theatre, in which each day some new comedy is represented; I was walking there with some intimate friends, when we saw a handsome elegant gentleman pass; he was searching for Madame d'Urban in every corner of the garden, and when he found her, he threw himself upon her neck, and kissed her tenderly. As Monsieur d'Urban was a witness to these caresses, we could not imagine that there was anything irregular in them, and thought that the gentleman must be some near relation of hers. And this proved to be

the case, for he was her father;[1] I was never more surprised than when I learned it. I had been so prejudiced against him that my imagination had pictured him to me as hideous. I expected to find him repulsive-looking, with haggard eyes and a ferocious countenance. Besides, as I have heard him spoken of for such ages, I expected to see a decrepit man, so I was amazed to find that he did not look more than forty years old, although I believe he is really over fifty, besides, he is as handsome as an angel, and has the kindest of faces!

All the same, I felt a secret horror of him when I reflected on his wife's miserable end.

He was accompanied by a stumpy little man, greatly inferior to him in good looks and breeding.

Monsieur and Madame d'Urban paid them great attention, and conducted them to their own house. We also wended our way home, and during the whole evening we did nothing but talk about the arrival of the Marquis de Ganges and his brother; for the little man whom I had seen was the Comte de Ganges, colonel of the Languedoc Regiment of dragoons, and husband of "La belle Gevaudan," mistress of Cardinal de Bonzi, with whom he had just quarrelled. The King had made over to the latter the confiscated wealth of Monsieur de Ganges, but he generously gave it back to his son as soon as he had arrived at an age to enjoy it.

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[1] The Marquis de Ganges. *See* chap. iii.—(*Trans.*)

The young Marquis married, as you are aware, a rich, amiable, and noble young lady, whom he took to Ganges, and then left her there, whilst he departed to rejoin his regiment and serve with it. Monsieur de Ganges, his father, resided at the château, where he was tolerated, because people had forgotten all about that business (his wife's murder), and because there was no one sufficiently interested in him either to side with him or to consider him as an outlaw. In the beginning he kept himself very quiet; but after a while he found means to flatter Monsieur de Baville by forcing his tenants to attend Mass. The Intendant corresponded with him frequently about this, and even sent for him to Montpellier to confer with him on the subject, and in consequence of this patronage he appeared again before the public.

His son left his wife to his care, and begged him to look after her kindly. But he (her father-in-law), knowing she had only just turned Catholic, and wishing to show his own zeal, took from her a maid-servant to whom she was very much attached, and who had been a long time in her service.

The young Marquise hid her grief at this, but had to bear other things of a like nature; she was all alone in the château with her terrible father-in-law, who ruled over all its inmates, and she never found herself *tête-à-tête* with him in the same room where her mother-in-law ended her life so tragically, without fearing for her own life!

But she found still further cause for alarm when

she discovered that the father-in-law was transformed into an adoring lover. She felt extremely embarrassed as to what conduct she should maintain. Her duty and her love debarred her from fanning so criminal a flame, but it was a dangerous thing to thwart a man in whom his passions produced such terrible results; she had seen the sad effects of so doing.

The young Marquise did not know how to solve the riddle. If she were to propose taking a journey, her father-in-law might put forward the pretext of religion to prevent her departure; she did not know where to turn for advice, for she suspected every one in the château.

The Baron de Moisac, her father, had just become a Catholic like herself, and had suffered a great deal in the cause of religion; but her father-in-law opened all her letters, and she thought that if she wrote to him, he (Monsieur de Ganges) would make a point of reporting it to the Intendant, who would praise him for doing so instead of blaming him, for everything is lawful if done in the cause of religion! There remained, therefore, only one remedy for the sufferings of the Marquise, although that might be long in reaching her; however, she had recourse to it, and that was—to write to her husband.

He was a Catholic of long standing, so there was no pretext for opening her letters to *him*. The Marquis received, therefore, the one she wrote to him on the subject. He shuddered when he

thought of the danger to which she was exposed, and, acting on the first impulse, took post and rushed off to Paris, and threw himself at the King's feet, imploring him to force his father to return into banishment, and promised his Majesty that he would maintain him (his father) in whatever part of the world he should be exiled.

The King was astonished when he heard that Monsieur de Ganges had broken his *parole*, and commanded that if he remained in the kingdom the suit against him should be revived.

This action of the son has been wrongly interpreted by those who were not acquainted with his reasons; the King also blamed him, and I too cannot excuse him, although I quite sympathise with him in his trouble.

However, the Comte de Ganges, who was at Court, having heard what was pending against his brother, arrived post-haste at Ganges, and took him away with him to Avignon, where they had only just arrived when we saw them pass us in the garden of the Commendatore Maldachini.

Madame d'Urban did all she could to persuade her father to remain at Avignon, but to stop there did not at all suit him in the situation in which he was then placed, and he elected to stay at L'Isle,[1] an enchanting little town near the Fountain of Vaucluse.

The Comte de Ganges, his brother, who had

[1] L'Isle, a small town, now celebrated for its woollen trade, in the department of Vaucluse, and 12 miles E. of Avignon.—(*Trans.*)

become quite a hermit, from grief at his quarrel with his wife, followed him to this retreat; but much less attention was paid to their departure than to the arrival of Monsieur de Phélypeaux, a son of Monsieur de Pontchartrain, Controller General of Finance, and consequently "a son of Fortune."

Although he was neither handsome nor well-bred, all the ladies laid themselves out to make a conquest of him, and all the gentlemen hastened to pay their court.

The Marquis des Essarts, although rich and childless, was always fortune-hunting, and followed this little fop in the tour he was making; at Montpellier a rather amusing adventure happened to him, but *he* did not find it amusing himself.

Monsieur de Phélypeaux wished to go and visit the Port of Cette;[1] Monsieur de Baville accompanied him, and that parasite Des Essarts was also of the party. They entered a little boat in order to ferry across the lagoon which at this spot opens into the Mediterranean. The wind proved contrary; in short, they were much longer crossing by the ferry than they had expected. But they consoled themselves for this delay, because they had had a good dinner before they embarked, thanks to the care of Monsieur de Baville.[2]

As they approached the galleys of Cette some fire-

[1] Cette, a fortified seaport town of the department of Hérault, France, near Beaucaire, between the Mediterranean and the lagoon of Thau, 17 miles S.W. of Montpellier.—(*Trans.*)

[2] The anecdote which follows is too coarse for translation; it is sufficient to state that the Marquis des Essarts was taken ill.—(*Trans.*)

works which were being let off in Monsieur de Phélypeaux's honour, put out one of his eyes. Fortunately, it was a *false orb*, and if the blow had struck in the slightest degree to the left, his sight would have been utterly done for; but his valet took another eye out of a portmanteau, put it in its socket, and nothing more was thought of it!

At Montpellier they went to the house of the Comte de Broglie,[1] who gave a magnificent fête in honour of Monsieur de Phélypeaux. This Count commanded the troops in Languedoc; he is a brother-in-law of Monsieur de Baville, the Intendant of this province, who has found the secret (whilst taking prisoner, from time to time, some of the pastors) how to persuade the Court that it is quite necessary that his brother-in-law should reside in the province; in this way he manages somehow to live, and to beget a large family, and even to save money. The Intendant is by no means negligent of his personal interests; he takes good care to fill his own coffers, and they say that he thirsts no less after money than he does after the blood of the Huguenots, and that he sheds the one in order to amass the other.

The Comtesse de Ganges was at the fête given by Monsieur de Broglie. Although she is not particularly friendly with the latter, she does not, from what people say, seem to regret her husband's absence very much, but *he* (the Comte de Ganges)

[1] Victor Maurice, Comte de Broglie, Maréchal de France, born 1647, died 4th August 1727, aged eighty.—(*Trans.*)

is fretting himself to death here. It is reported that this lady is very lovely, although she is no longer young.

I expect to go soon to Montpellier, and I am very curious to see the lady[1] and her cardinal, who is said to be very charming. I have heard a good deal of their intrigues, and as soon as I learn any details I will let you know.

As news from me gives you pleasure, I beg you to give me yours always in return. Every day here I am questioned a hundred times about Madame de Maintenon and that business. I am asked who she is? where she came from? who are her parents? I must confess that I don't know all about her, but I dare not say so to them, for the sake of my own credit: I know she is the widow of Scarron, and that is about all, for I have never troubled myself about her genealogy; and, with the exception of her brother, whom every one knows, I have always looked upon her as a sort of "Melchizedek!"

You can help me in this matter by telling me all you know about her; find out also if there is anything you do *not* know, and mind that the facts you are told are *correct*, for it is essential that accusations should be facts, especially in the provinces, where people pay more attention to this sort of thing.—I remain, etc.

[1] The Comtesse de Ganges just mentioned (née Mademoiselle Gevaudan).—(*Trans.*)

LETTER X

REPLY FROM HER FRIEND

Madame de Maintenon—Her family history—Her maiden name, Françoise d'Aubigné—Monsieur d'Aubigné—Captain d'Aubigné—His imprisonment—The governor's pretty daughter—"Pity is akin to love"—Two people make a plot—A successful escape—A happy marriage—Misfortunes—Starvation—Treachery—Imprisonment—A sad separation and a sad meeting—Birth of Françoise d'Aubigné—Madame de Villette—A forlorn baby—Madame de Sainte Hermine—Recantation, liberation, and emigration—The forlorn baby and her parents settle in America—Comte d'Aubigné—Death of Captain and Madame d'Aubigné in exile—Françoise d'Aubigné returns to France—Poitou—Madame de Villette again to the front—Education—Huguenot or Catholic?—Françoise appears in Paris—Monsieur de Sainte Hermine—Françoise marries Scarron—A happy union—Grace and deformity—Widowhood—Madame de Sainte Basile—The Couvent de la Raquette—Monsieur de Villette—Monsieur Murcé—Lieutenant-General Le Moine—Visit of Madame de Maintenon to Accordée—Her pension—Petition to the King—"Am I never going to hear the last of the Widow Scarron?"—The strange prophecy—How it came true—Madame de Montespan—Madame de Maintenon is made governess to the Montespan children—She is introduced to the King—Madame de Montespan is disgraced—The persecutions of the Huguenots attributed to Madame de Maintenon—Her hatred of the Jesuits—The Abbé Tiberge—The Abbé Brisacier—The Duc de Brancas—The Princesse d'Harcourt—The Comte Daguin.

PARIS.

MADAME,—You ask of me more than you think when you beg me to give you the history of Madame de Maintenon.

Nobody here has as yet tried to make it out, and the undertaking is a difficult one on all points, but some day the subject may employ a better pen than mine, and as I have already told you, it is dangerous to discuss certain people.

However, all these considerations will not hinder me from telling you all I know about Madame de Maintenon, as a mark of my confidence in you, and because I can trust myself to your discretion.

Her name was Françoise d'Aubigné.[1] She is a lady of noble birth, and Monsieur d'Aubigné, her grandfather, was a worthy and respected man. He was of the Protestant religion, and his remains are interred in the church of St. Peter at Geneva. Our heroine's father was the son of this illustrious D'Aubigné. In his early youth he had the misfortune to fall into the clutches of the law; I do not know for what cause, but I do know that he would have experienced its utmost rigour, and that his life was in danger, but the daughter of the governor (of the jail), touched by his merits and misfortunes, determined to help him to escape. She was a most charming and generous-hearted girl. Monsieur d'Aubigné saw how kind she was, and how greatly

[1] *See* note, under head of Marquise de Maintenon.—(*Trans.*)

he had need of her assistance, and took, therefore, the utmost pains to please her, which he succeeded in doing. When he felt that he had won her affections he offered her a life which could only be preserved by her aid, and swore to her that it was only the hope of passing it with her that made him wish to prolong it.

The pretty creature was touched by his devoted words, and made him swear fidelity to her by every oath and by the expressions he had just used; then she promised to help him to escape from prison, and to accompany him if necessary to the very Antipodes, provided that he would marry her at the first opportunity. Having thus made this contract they thought only of their escape.

Monsieur d'Aubigné entrusted himself to the care of his lady-love, who managed things so well that only a few days after she warned him to hold himself in readiness for the following night. She chose a very dark one in order to carry out her design. With her and Cupid for his guide, he was led stealthily out into a street where a trusty man awaited them with horses, which conveyed them with all possible speed to a safe place. There Monsieur d'Aubigné, who was a man imbued with sentiments of honour, acquitted himself of the promise he had made to his lady-love, and married her publicly.

Their flight made a great commotion in the place from which they had fled. They were pursued, but at last, when it was found impossible to capture them, the matter dropped, and Monsieur

d'Aubigné and his bride enjoyed the pleasures of liberty in exile.

She had taken all that she could with her, and had even carried off some of her mother's clothes. They sold everything, and while the money lasted, the newly-married couple thought themselves the happiest people in the world. But their funds, not being very considerable, were soon exhausted, and as people cannot live upon love, he found himself on the brink of incurring a danger almost as great as the one from which he had escaped; in fact he was on the eve of dying of starvation. His grief was aggravated by seeing his beloved wife exposed to this also, as well as the infant pledge of their love, which seemed destined to die before it had scarce had time to live.

In this dire extremity Monsieur d'Aubigné conceived a most dangerous design; but as he alone was to run the risk he carried it out without consulting his wife, and returned to France in order to endeavour to recover some of his property, and to find some means of subsistence for her, intending when he should have realised a small competence to return and fetch her. He even thought, as he was forgotten in his own part of the country, that he might find some friend with whom he could stay *incognito*. But he failed in this and fell into treacherous hands, which betrayed him, and delivered him up to justice.

Monsieur d'Aubigné had not taken farewell of his wife, and the first inkling she had of his design

was by a letter he wrote to her from his first stopping place. This news made her tremble for the life of a husband who was so dear to her, and she suffered terrible anxiety when she heard of the misfortune which she had only too clearly foreseen, and when she learned that her husband had been thrown into prison.

If it were true that people die of grief, Madame d'Aubigné would certainly have died of it on that occasion; but she steeled herself to bear it, and no longer able to flatter herself that she could rescue her husband a second time from the peril which had overtaken him, she resolved that she would at least share it with him; and although she was very near her confinement, and travelling would be a great risk to her, she would not put it off, but started by *diligence* to rejoin her husband, and voluntarily gave herself up to be imprisoned with him.

There[1] she gave birth to her famous daughter, whose career is the astonishment of her century.

The parents of Monsieur d'Aubigné had been angry at his conduct and his marriage, and had thrown him off, and Madame de Villette,[2] his sister, was the only person who came to visit them.

She was deeply afflicted at the state in which she found them. They were bereft even of the necessaries of life, but the saddest sight of all was the

[1] At the Château de Niort, department of Deux Sèvres, 34 miles E.N.E. from La Rochelle.—(*Trans.*)

[2] The sister of Monsieur d'Aubigné was married to the Marquis de Villette, a Huguenot nobleman of Poitou, and took charge of Madame de Maintenon when the latter was a child.—(*Trans.*)

poor little baby covered with wretched rags, and exposed to the horrors of starvation: its feeble cries would have moved the hardest of hearts. Starvation and grief prevented Madame d'Aubigné from being able to suckle her child, and as she had no food to give it, she expected every moment to see it die of hunger in her arms.

Madame de Villette had a daughter who afterwards became Madame de Sainte Hermine, and as the wet-nurse of the latter was well able to nurse both, Madame de Villette carried off the little D'Aubigné child with her, and so her daughter's nurse suckled both.

Madame de Villette also sent her brother some linen for himself and his wife; and some time afterwards Monsieur d'Aubigné found means, by changing his religion, to get out of prison, and took his departure out of the kingdom. As he never expected to set foot in it again during his life, he amassed all his property for a long voyage, and embarked with his family for America, where he lived peacefully with his wife, devoting all their care to the education of their children.

They succeeded best in the education which they gave their daughter, who is certainly a prodigy of cleverness. Their son, who is now styled the Comte d'Aubigné, is not wanting in that way either, but it may be said with truth that "the distaff holds the pre-eminence" in this family. Monsieur and Madame d'Aubigné died in exile,[1] whilst their

[1] The Comte d'Aubigné died at Martinique in the year 1647; the

children were still very young. Their daughter, who was their eldest child, and was then already a grown-up girl, became possessed with the longing common to all mankind of revisiting her native land, in hopes of recovering some of their property. She sought, therefore, for some means of returning to France, and finding a vessel ready to sail for that destination, took her passage in it, and disembarked at La Rochelle.[1]

From thence she journeyed into Poitou, and found out her aunt Madame de Villette, to whom she knew she owed her life. Madame de Villette received her tenderly, and after having told her that there were no hopes of her recovering her father's property, which had all been wasted and confiscated by the law, she informed her that she might take up her residence with her, and that she should never want for bread whilst under her care.

Mademoiselle d'Aubigné accepted her aunt's offer, and did all she could to help by her services one to whom she was so much indebted. She made it her aim also to make herself beloved by her cousin and foster-sister, and in order to please them both she showed herself anxious to become acquainted with the religion of her forefathers. She asked to see the pastors and to go to the services, and shortly after she took up so very

Comtesse at Paris two or three years after; so Madame Du Noyer's friend is mistaken in saying that she died abroad.—(*Trans.*)

[1] La Rochelle, a fortified seaport town of France in the department of Charente Inférieure, situated on the shores of the Atlantic, nearly midway between Nantes and Bordeaux. It was for many years one of the principal centres of Huguenot persecution.—(*Trans.*)

strongly the Protestant doctrines, that there is no doubt that she would have embraced their religion if her parents' relatives, who were Catholics, and who had neglected them in in their exile and had never offered her any help in her need, had not taken upon themselves (in order to curry favour) to warn the authorities of the danger to which Mademoiselle d'Aubigné's salvation was exposed, and requested an order for her to be lodged with Catholics. This petition was well received at Court, and Mademoiselle d'Aubigné was ordered to leave Madame de Villette and to reside with her officious and zealous relations. The order was carried out, and Mademoiselle d'Aubigné was torn from the arms of her aunt, Madame de Villette, who was the only one who had shown her any kindness. She wept bitterly at the separation, and declared to her and to her cousin (who had by this time married Monsieur de Sainte Hermine) that she should always preserve the remembrance of their goodness, and of the invaluable benefits she had received from their religion, and would repay them for both in due time. Her aunt and her cousin, who had never dreamt of putting any pressure on her inclinations (however much they have been accused of so doing), embraced her tenderly, but did not insist on her promises. She was then conducted to a relative, who being compelled to go to Paris on account of a lawsuit, took Mademoiselle d'Aubigné with her, intending to make use of her wit and her personal beauty to assist her in her suit. This lady hired

furnished apartments in Paris, in the same house in which the famous Scarron lodged.

She made his acquaintance, and begged him one day, when she had to go out alone, to allow Mademoiselle d'Aubigné to sit in his room with him, regarding him as a *chaperon*, with whom her cousin would gain more good than harm. Every one knows that Scarron had nothing healthy about him but his mind, and that he was a dwarf and hump-backed; all these various infirmities had induced him to take the nickname of "the Queen's invalid," a title that was worth five hundred écus of pension to him! With all this, the young lady's virtue ran no risks whilst with him. Scarron was charmed by the wit of Mademoiselle d'Aubigné. Her relative took her out with her in her hackney-coach whenever she went to petition the judges: but when she went to her solicitor, or to her lawyers, she left Mademoiselle d'Aubigné with Scarron, and went out alone in a sedan chair.

Scarron had thus frequent opportunities of seeing Mademoiselle d'Aubigné, and each time discovered in her some new charm; he was greatly touched by the misfortunes which had already come upon her, even before her birth, and which she had related so movingly that she would have excited the compassion of the most hard-hearted person; he resolved therefore to aid her in living peacefully, by bestowing on her the necessary means for becoming a nun. But after having reflected over this, he bethought himself of proposing another alternative,

which would be a surprise to her. "Mademoiselle," he said to her one day, when her relative had as usual left her with him, "I feel deeply touched by all the sorrows you have undergone, and the situation in which you are now placed, and for some days I have been reflecting on some means for remedying this. I think I have now discovered two ways of doing so, you can select whichever suits you best, or reject them both, should you not consider either of them agreeable to you; I wish I could procure for you the good fortune that you deserve; but my own is too limited to do so, and all that I can suggest to you is to share mine with me, or else to select some convent, for which I will pay your dowry. I would that I could offer you something better: look you! mademoiselle, consult your own feelings, I know that I am a hideous fellow, but I cannot remould myself, and I offer myself, such as I am, but I assure you that being what I am I would not offer myself to any other woman, for it is only because I esteem you so highly that you have inspired me with the desire to marry you; for certainly that is the last thing I ever thought I should do. So you see it rests with you to determine whether you will remain as you are without complaining, by your own choice, or whether you will become a nun, or my wife."

Mademoiselle d'Aubigné thanked Monsieur Scarron, as well she might. For she felt only too acutely how disagreeable it was to be dependent on another, and longed for some such arrangement, which, although it was not a very advantageous one,

would at least give her a subsistence; and thus, feeling no doubt that she had no vocation to become a nun, she replied without hesitation to Monsieur Scarron that she felt under so great an obligation to him, that she could not but choose the alternative he put before her, and would by her care of him show her gratitude for it. Scarron was highly delighted by her assent, for he looked forward with great pleasure to passing his life with one who charmed him so much. They agreed that they would ask her relative's consent that very evening; she gave it willingly, and the marriage, which soon after took place, was the beginning of Madame de Maintenon's good luck.

She lived very happily with her celebrated husband. He had a comfortable competence, but as his income was only for his life, she lost all in losing him, and found herself once more in the same position in which she had been before she married him. She became one of the "Hospitalières"[1] of the Place Royale, and her deceased husband's friends supported her. It was whilst she was there (with this sisterhood) that began the friendship she always kept up with a nun named Madame de Sainte Basile, whom she still continues to visit very frequently at the Couvent de la Raquette, where she now lives; for it must be said (and it is greatly to the credit of Madame de Maintenon) that she has a grateful heart, and that in her own good fortune she always re-

[1] A sort of institution or sisterhood for ladies of noble rank.—(*Trans.*)

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members her old friends, and such persons to whom she owes any obligation. See what she did for Monsieur de Villette[1] and for Madame de Sainte Hermine, when her change of religion removed the obstacle which had hindered her wish to serve her. She married her daughter (Madame d'Hermine's) to the Comte de Mailly, and dowered her with several millions of louis. She showered wealth on Sainte Hermine, and Monsieur de Villette holds the highest appointments, so much so, that if he had not spoilt his good luck by a *mésalliance* in his old age he would have obtained still greater advancement. That little Murcé, his son, has just married, through the interest of Madame de Maintenon, a very rich heiress, the daughter of Monsieur Le Moine, a lieutenant-general in Chaumont.[2] One of the conditions was that Madame de Maintenon should pay a visit to the betrothed and this was strictly carried out, for Madame de Maintenon landed at the quay at Alençon,[3] and went to the house of that worthy man, Monsieur Le Moine, who had assembled all his relations round him in order that they might be witnesses of the honour vouchsafed him of receiving her

[1] The young Marquis de Villette was made *chef d'escadre*; but, according to the account of Voltaire, who was inimical to Madame de Maintenon on many points, she always refused to request any favours for her family, nor did she ever ask for any for herself.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Chaumont, a district in the department of Haute Marne, 134 miles from Paris.—(*Trans.*)

[3] Alençon, chief town of the department of Orne, 105 miles W.S.W. of Paris, celebrated for its castle, cathedral, and manufacture of lace.—(*Trans.*)

under his roof. But this digression has made me go on too fast, and I must return to Madame Scarron, whom I left at the convent in the Place Royale. Her husband's friends did all they could to persuade the Government to continue to her the pension that Monsieur Scarron had enjoyed during his own lifetime, and to effect this presented to the King petitions which all began with: "*The Widow Scarron humbly prayeth your Majesty.*" But all these petitions produced no results, and the King was so worried by them that he sometimes exclaimed, "Am I never going to hear the last of the Widow Scarron?"

She left the convent and went to reside at the Hôtel d'Albert,[1] where her husband had always been held in the highest consideration. Whilst there a very curious thing happened to her, which is known to very few persons, and which I can assure

[1] "This (Hôtel d'Albert) should properly be Hôtel d'Albret. It was the residence of the Seigneur César Phébus d'Albret or Miossius, a French marshal and courtier of the seventeenth century, who owed his rise partly to the favour of Anne of Austria and of Cardinal Mazarin, by whom his talents were much valued. He was one of the lovers of Ninon de l'Enclos, and among the friends of Madame d'Aubigné, and was equally celebrated for his gallantry and courage. He was at the sieges of Mardick and Dunkercque, but his behaviour in action did not prevent the Abbé d'Aumont from making the following joke at his expense. The Abbé having taken a stall at a theatre, found it occupied by D'Albret, who refused to give it up. 'Look at the gallant marshal!' exclaimed the Abbé, 'he has taken nothing but my stall.' It is related as a peculiarity of D'Albret that he always became ill at the sight of a pig's head, which caused the Maréchal de Clérambault to say, 'If no other way can be found of conquering D'Albret, take a sword against him in one hand and a pig's head in the other!' He died in 1676, and has thus been spoken of by St. Evremond, 'Un maréchal, l'ornement de France, rare en esprit, magnifique en dépense.'"—(A'Beckett, *Univ. Biog.*)

you is perfectly true. Some masons were at work at the Hôtel d'Albert, not far from Madame Scarron's room. One of them entered the apartment, and finding two or three ladies there who were calling on Madame Scarron, he begged her to give him a private interview. She led him into a boudoir, where he foretold everything that was going to happen to her.

I know not whence he drew the information that after-events have justified; but Madame Scarron thought that there was so little probability of any fulfilment of this prophecy that she set small value on it. She seemed, however, rather excited when she rejoined her lady-friends, who said to her at once, "That man must have told you something very agreeable, for you seem much gayer than usual."

"I should have very good cause to be so," replied Madame Scarron, "if I could believe all that he has promised me."

"What has he promised you?" cried the ladies, "may we not know?"

"No!" answered Madame Scarron, laughing; "but on the chance of its coming true, you had better all make yourselves very agreeable to me beforehand!" The ladies were inquisitive, but could get nothing further out of her; however, Madame Scarron confided all that the mason had predicted to her to a female friend from whom she had no secrets, and it was through this friend that it became known, when there was no longer any

occasion to conceal it, and when events made the thing common property.

Some time afterwards, Madame Scarron was recommended to insinuate herself into the good graces of Madame de Montespan, the King's mistress, who had immense influence over him.

Madame Scarron was presented to her, and conversed with her so agreeably that Madame de Montespan, touched by the trouble in which she saw her, resolved to relieve her from it, and took upon herself to present a petition to the King in her behalf. Thereupon petitions for the Widow Scarron came to the fore as plentifully as ever!

"How is this?" exclaimed the King. "Here is the Widow Scarron *again!*"

"Well, really, sire," answered Madame de Montespan, "it is a long time since you last heard anything about her, and it is surprising that your Majesty has never done anything for the poor woman, who deserves a better fate, not only on her own account, but because of her husband's reputation." The King, who was always anxious to gratify Madame de Montespan, granted Madame Scarron everything she desired. When Madame Scarron went to thank Madame de Montespan, the latter was so charmed with her that she longed to present her to the King, and finally proposed to him that she should be appointed governess to their children. The King consented, and Madame Scarron made such good use of her wit and her advantages that she quite won Madame de Montespan's heart and confidence, and became a favourite with her.

Madame de Montespan, who now confided everything to Madame Scarron, sent for her one evening and told her that she (Madame de Montespan) was in avery embarrassing position; that she had just received a note from the King which required an immediate answer; but that although she was possessed of considerable wit, she knew not how to reply to it.

There are times, however, when one feels totally devoid of wit, and Madame de Montespan was precisely in that predicament.

All this time the man who had brought the King's note was waiting for the answer, and Madame de Montespan was in despair.

If it had only been mere tenderness that was wanting she would have found plenty of it in her heart, but it was necessary to keep up the grace of her style, and on this particular evening she felt her head fit for nothing.

She had therefore bethought herself of entreating Madame Scarron to write the reply for her, and in order to do so, handed her the King's note. Madame Scarron modestly declined to do it, but Madame de Montespan insisted, and Madame Scarron, not daring to disobey her, answered the King's note in the most tender and witty fashion.

Madame de Montespan was charmed with it. She copied the letter out, and, after having sealed it, gave it to the man in waiting, and went to bed highly satisfied; and the King, on *his* side, was also immensely delighted. He thought that Madame de

Montespan had surpassed herself, and attributed this increase of wittiness to an increase of affection. He passed the greater part of the night in reading and re-reading the letter, finding in every word some new subject for admiration, in every expression an inexhaustible delight; in fact, the King thought himself the happiest man in the world for having inspired his mistress with such pretty sentiments.

I think that you will be very curious to see this letter, but I cannot satisfy you in that, as I have never seen it myself. I cannot take upon myself, either, to compose one, as I could in no way come up to the idea that I have given you of it. It would be very difficult for me to be clever enough to do it. I have never been able to express the thoughts of other people, and it is necessary for me to feel things *personally* before I can express them myself.

As soon as the King was up, he hastened to Madame de Montespan.

"What star was shining on you last night, madame!" he exclaimed on entering, "that you wrote me such pretty things? There is no one your equal for wit, and you can express tenderness as charmingly as you can show it; I am certainly the happiest of men!"

Madame de Montespan was rather confused at hearing these praises, which were due to another, and blushed at "having donned the feathers of the peacock."

The King perceived her embarrassment, and being very suspicious, insisted on knowing the cause of it.

She denied that there was anything amiss; but he persisted in solving the mystery, and Madame de Montespan was compelled to tell him all about it, for fear that he might take into his head that there was something worse.

The King was extremely surprised, but, as he is very polite, he did not say all he thought about it. He had already remarked the difference in the style, which had appeared to him gayer and more fluent, and he inquired if Madame Scarron showed as much wit in her conversation as she did in her letter?

Madame Scarron now fancied she saw a strong probability of the fulfilment of the mason's prediction, and entertained great expectations from the King's desire to see her; and although she had passed her first youth, and could not flatter herself that she was beautiful, she still hoped to make "the grand conquest" which her Fate had promised her.

She has a splendid figure, a high-bred carriage, lovely eyes, and deep coral-coloured lips, and her eyes and her wit play their part so well together that everything she says makes a deep impression.

The King's heart was already so prejudiced in her favour that he succumbed at once, and three or four interviews with her quite drove poor Madame de Montespan out of the field. For some time the latter was ignorant of this misfortune, but at last was in despair when she found that she herself had "forged the weapon that had vanquished her."

The King purchased for Madame Scarron the estate of Maintenon; and from that time she ceased

to be Madame Scarron, and no one here has the slightest doubt that the King *did* marry her.[1]

Never has there been such good fortune as hers. Others can only gain theirs through her, for Livia had not greater influence over the mind of Augustus than she has over that of Louis.

They say that it is she who has been the origin of all the misfortunes of the Protestants, and consequently of all those which the Revocation has brought upon the kingdom; but for my part I do not believe it; first, because it was the fault of the Jesuits, whom she does not like sufficiently well to side with them; besides, it is not likely, as she once had a leaning towards the aforesaid (Protestant) religion, and understands it a little, that she would have taken such a strong aversion to persons who have never done her any harm, and who, between you and me, are "not as black as they are painted." All our *savants* agree that their creed is the same as

[1] It appears that Voltaire at least had no doubt that an actual legal marriage took place, for he says: "Madame de Maintenon inspira à Louis XIV tant de tendresse et de scrupule, que le roi, par le conseil du père La Chaise, l'épousa secrètement, au mois de janvier 1686, dans une petite chapelle, qui était au bout de l'appartement occupé depuis par le Duc de Bourgogne. Il n'y eut aucun contrat, aucune stipulation. L'archévêque de Paris, Harlai de Chanvalon, leur donna la bénédiction; le confesseur y assista; Montchevreuil (et non pas le chevalier de Forbin, comme le disent les Mémoires de Choisy) et Bontems, premier valet de chambre, y furent comme témoins. . . . Louis XIV était alors dans sa quarante-huitième année et la personne qu'il épousait, dans sa cinquante-deuxième; (on dit) qu'après la mort de l'archévêque de Paris, Harlai, en 1695, près de dix ans après le mariage, ses laquais trouvèrent dans ses vieilles culottes l'acte de célébration!"—(Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV.*)

ours, and that they only repudiate dogmas, which we also could do very well without, and which are not by any means divine ordinances; but I am forgetting that you are in a country where the Inquisition[1] exists, and that this letter might greatly compromise you. I hope, however, that you will look after your own safety as well as mine. The fact is that Madame de Maintenon is inimical to the Jesuits, and is backed up in this by the Abbé Tiberge and the Abbé Brisacier,[2] who are the Presidents of the Foreign Mission Society, and who accuse the Jesuits of condoning idolatry in China, and encouraging the adoration which that nation pays to a certain Confucius,[3] who was a heathen, and who is held in veneration in that country.

The Jesuits deny this with their usual craftiness, so their differences, which are to be settled by the Sorbonne,[4] and by the Pope, occasion as much sensation as did those of the Archbishop of Cambrai with the Bishop of Meaux, and spring from the same cause.

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[1] The first Inquisition dates from the war of the Albigenses, 1204. It was finally abolished in Spain in 1820; in Portugal, 1815; in Italy, 1782; in England, 1558; in France, 1598.—(*Trans.*)

[2] "Jean de Brisacier, born at Blois in 1603, entered the society of Jesuits in 1619, and was professor of humanity and philosophy in several of their colleges. He ultimately became rector of the College of Clermont at Paris, and died in September 1668; he was author of *Le Jansénisme confondu.*"—(A'Beckett, *Univ. Biog.*)

[3] Confucius, or Kung-fu-tse, the celebrated Chinese philosopher, was born at Chanping, 550 B.C. He died in 479 B.C.—(*Trans.*)

[4] The famous college of the Sorbonne in Paris was founded by Robert de Sorbon, confessor and chaplain to Louis IX, in 1252. Printing was first introduced into Paris and France by the doctors of the Sorbonne. The college was suppressed on 5th April 1792.—(*Trans.*)

Madame de Maintenon never forgets an injury nor a benefit, and the remembrance of the latter, which she received in former times from the Duc de Brancas,[1] prompts her to be kind to the Princesse d'Harcourt,[2] his daughter, and to put up with all her impertinences. She suffered from them so much during a journey to Namur[3] that she really ought to have thrown her (the Princess) over; but when some one spoke of it to her, she replied, "I forgive her because she is crazy, and I show kindness to her because I received so much from her father in old days."

The De Noailles family will be the people who will take most pride in Madame de Maintenon's good fortune, and the marriage of the little D'Aubigné girl, her niece, with the Comte Daguin, son of the Maréchal de Noailles, will doubly cement their interests.

The latter obtained his marshalship with so little trouble that Madame de Maintenon fancied that she could obtain the same honour for her own brother, and the King would willingly have bestowed this favour on her, but the Comte d'Aubigné does not wish to run any risks to win it; and although all he

[1] Charles, Comte and Duc de Brancas (Languedoc); son of George, Duc de Villars et Brancas, and his wife Julienne-Hippolyte d'Estrées. —(*Trans.*)

[2] This Princesse d'Harcourt was Françoise, eldest daughter of Charles Duc de Brancas and his wife Noble Demoiselle Susanne Garnier; Françoise married Alphonse, Prince d'Harcourt and Duc de Lorraine, French ambassador to Madrid.—(*Trans.*)

[3] Namur, a fortified town of Belgium, at the confluence of the rivers Sambre and Meuse. It belonged to the French till the establishment of the kingdom of Belgium.—(*Trans.*)

would have to do would be to command during a campaign, he always says, "I dare not do it! I should die!"[1]

So much for Madame de Maintenon.

I have learned all that I have told you on very good authority, and you can depend upon its being correct.—I remain, etc.

[1] Couplet from an old song:

"Je ne saurois!
J'en mourrois!"—(*Trans.*)

LETTER XI

FROM MADAME DU NOYER TO HER FRIEND

Montpellier—Beauty and situation of the town—The charms and gaiety of the women—Their grace and independence—Hospitality of the residents—Distinguished society—Its climate—Consumptive patients—The Marquise d'Aunis—Cardinal de Bonzi—The Comtesse de Ganges—The Commendatore Maldachini—The intrigues of Cardinal de Bonzi—History of the Bonzi family—The Bishop of Béziers—Marie de Médicis—The Marquis de Castres—Mademoiselle de Vivonne—Madame de Montespan — Madame de Castres — Youthful escapades of Cardinal de Bonzi—Calls himself the Baron de Castelnau—He has his fortune told by a professor of palmistry—The Grand-Duke of Tuscany—The Cardinal de Bonzi goes on a mission to Poland — King John Sobieski — The prophecy is fulfilled—Françoise, Queen of Poland—The Marquis d'Arquien—Madame de Béthune—Mysterious history of the Queen's birth—Her intrigues with Cardinal de Bonzi—"La belle Gevaudan"—The Cardinal falls in love with her—Madame de Mariotte—A dreadful scandal—Madame de Mariotte plays a little game—The poet Vitral—The Comte de Ganges—Monsieur de Baville—Monsieur de Lemoignon—Madame Daudessan—Madame de Baville—The fascinating lady-companion—An unfortunate *fiasco*—Marriage of "la belle Gevaudan"—"At the sign of the good old Ram"—Matrimonial squabbles—Separation.

MONTPELLIER.

MADAME,—Here I am, at Montpellier.[1] I fancied that there could not be anything prettier than

[1] Montpellier, a city on the Lez, department of Hérault, France.

Avignon; but in certain respects Montpellier far surpasses it.

The town is built on a hill, the consequence of which is that the ground is not level, and that one cannot walk two steps without going up or down.

The suburbs are not so beautiful as those of Avignon: the streets are much narrower, and there is no river flowing past the city walls; but in spite of all this, it possesses many charms that might be vainly sought elsewhere; and I recollect that when I went to take my farewell of Monsieur[1] before this journey, the Prince said to me that I was going to one of the loveliest places on the earth, and that he would congratulate me if I stopped any time at Montpellier, as he himself had never been in a more agreeable place, and even after the lapse of thirty years remembered it with delight.

I have never met with any women so agreeable as those of Montpellier; even the plain ones are so charming that they fascinate you. You can judge by this what the pretty ones must be, and there are hosts of them. They have not the noble carriage of the Avignon ladies, but they are more genial and spirited, and their wit shines in their eyes, and is reflected in their manners. They are very sociable and gay; and although they nearly always talk in their own provincial dialect, they do it with so much grace and natural eloquence that I think that even

It has a university and fine seminaries for medicine and pharmacy. It is situated on a hill, amidst lovely scenery; Louis XIII besieged it in 1622, and took it from the Calvinists.—(*Trans.*)

[1] Monsieur, a title of the Duc d'Orléans.—(*Trans.*)

Cicero would have yielded the palm to them! All their actions are animated by a lively independence, which bestows an additional charm upon them.

Every day here the ladies promenade up and down a little square called *La Canourgue*, with mantillas on their heads, each with her *beau*. This freedom of manner at first encourages strangers, but the latter find that they have to draw back if they go too far. There is no town in the world where strangers are so hospitably welcomed as at Montpellier. One has only to be known, and one is visited and sought out with friendliness, and asked to all their entertainments.

They gamble here quite as much as at Avignon, but they have dinner parties much more frequently; and I must confess that I like the latter entertainment better than any other, because it is the only one that one can spin out as long as one likes.

There are numbers of men of rank here, belonging to the courts of justice and the royal tribunals, as well as governors of provinces and commandants of regiments, who make it their headquarters.

The air of Montpellier[1] is said to be one of the finest in the world, and the skill of the medical men here is so renowned that numbers of foreigners are attracted hither from other countries, especially the English, who nearly always get cured here of a malady to which they are very subject, and which

[1] The mean temperature of the year at Montpellier is 59.5°; winter, 44.2°; summer, 76° Fahr.—(*Trans.*)

MARIA DE MEDICIS
Trium Regum Mater
B. Moncornet excū

LONDON: RICHARD BENTLEY & SON: 1890.

they call *consumption*, which is the reason that one always sees them here in times of peace.

The Marquise d'Aunis, who had only just returned from exile as I was leaving Avignon, gave me a letter to Cardinal de Bonzi her uncle, who is the kindest of men. He introduced me to the Comtesse de Ganges, whose little husband I had met in the garden of the Commendatore Maldachini.

This lady's flirtations with the Cardinal have made a great talk in society; he has always paid her great attention, and I think has just now forfeited all esteem and consideration. This is the usual result of these long-enduring intrigues; and the Cardinal has done himself a great deal of damage by it, and lowered himself considerably in the King's estimation.

The family of De Bonzi was, at one time, one of the best in Florence; but it is no longer on the same footing, for the Cardinal's father had so mismanaged his affairs that his brother, the Bishop of Béziers (who was wealthy and had been highly esteemed by Queen Maria di Medici),[1] was obliged to support part of his family for him, and thereupon adopted two of the children, a boy and a girl.

He married the girl to the Marquis de Castres, Governor of Montpellier, and from this union sprang the Marquis de Castres (with whom *you* are acquainted, and who married Mademoiselle de Vivonne,

[1] Maria di Medici, daughter of Francesco, Duke of Tuscany, and wife of Henry IV of France, born 1573, married 1600, died 3d July 1642, in extreme poverty at Cologne.—(*Trans.*)

a niece of Madame de Montespan), and also the Marquise Donis[1] at Avignon, and several other children.

The Bishop of Béziers destined his nephew (who was younger than Madame de Castres) for the Church, and brought him up with a view to this; but with the capriciousness of youth the Abbé de Bonzi doffed his *soutane* and donned a hat and feather, and betook himself to Florence to win back from the Grand-Duke the estates that he declared belonged to the Bonzi family. He was not, however, very successful in this matter; and whilst he was carrying it on, a clever mathematician looked at him fixedly one day, and told him "that he must doff his plumes and his useless sword, for fate called him to another destiny, and to fulfil this happily he must return to ecclesiastical life."

The Baron de Castelnau (for he had adopted this title in leaving his profession of Abbé) was very much surprised at what this man said to him, and desired to learn more on the subject; whereupon the mathematician examined his countenance more earnestly, looked at his palm, and after many "hems and haws," as are usual on such occasions, declared to him that if he would return to the priesthood "he would firstly enjoy splendid benefices, then be made a bishop, and finally an archbishop; that he would be entrusted with important negotiations between foreign potentates, and that when his eyes became sore he should be made a cardinal!" He also said that

[1] D'Aunis.—(*Trans.*)

"he would approach very near to a tiara," but that he could not say whether he would wear it. He also warned him "to beware of the year of his grand climacteric, which might prove the last of his life."

The Baron had this horoscope drawn up for himself, and although he did not put much faith in it, he kept it carefully by him.

Shortly afterwards, his friends advised him not to go on with his suit against his Sovereign, but to seek his friendship; and the end of it was that the Grand-Duke[1] bestowed several benefices on him, and appointed him his "Resident" at the Court of France. Behold therefore the Baron de Castelnau transformed again into the Abbé de Bonzi!

The Bishop of Béziers, his uncle, was charmed at this metamorphosis, and hailed his return to France with joy; and, sometime afterwards, being himself translated to the Archbishopric of Narbonne, bestowed the Bishopric of Béziers on his nephew, the Abbé de Bonzi, who ultimately, by the death of his uncle, became himself Archbishop of Narbonne, and consequently "Primate of all France," and President of the province of Languedoc. During the disturbances in Poland[2] he was sent thither by

[1] Cosmo III di Medici, Grand-Duke of Tuscany.—(*Trans.*)

[2] In 1654 the Russians invaded Poland; the following year, 1655, Charles Gustavus, King of Sweden, declared war against the former country, and conquered it. Great disturbances followed this, and John II was forced to abdicate the throne. On 11th November John Sobieski (born 1624, died 17th June 1696), son of a Polish statesman, defeated the Turks at Kotzim, and was crowned King of Poland 1673; he married Françoise, daughter of the Marquis d'Arquien.—(*Trans.*)

the Court, and it is said that his negotiations contributed largely to placing Sobieski on the throne.

It was on his return from this expedition, when he was suffering from inflammation of the eyes, brought on by fatigue and bad weather, that he wrote jokingly to his sister, Madame de Castres: "I do not know whether I shall soon be elected cardinal, but I *do* know that I have horribly sore eyes." However, the rest was to follow. On his arrival in France he found a messenger charged with the offer of the cardinal's hat, and he was elected cardinal at the recommendation of the King of Poland, whom he had so well served. But, although he owed so many advantages to his splendid talents, he owed still more to his handsome person; and the Queen of Poland, who set greater store by the prelate's good looks than she did by the services he had rendered her husband the King, felt for him something more than mere gratitude. You know that the Queen is Françoise, daughter of the Marquis d'Arquien, and sister of Madame de Béthune.[1] She is said to be beautiful, so that the new cardinal must be in the pleasantest of positions, supported as he is by both love and good fortune. Matters had come to such a pass that the Queen of Poland could no longer endure his absence, and she determined to

[1] Madame de Béthune, sister of Françoise, Queen of Poland, daughter of the Marquis d'Arquien, and wife of the Marquis de Béthune, of the family of the Ducs de Sully. They took their title from Béthune, on the river Biette, in Artois. A branch of this distinguished family emigrated to Scotland.—(*Trans.*)

go to the mineral waters of Bourbonne,[1] so that she might have an opportunity of seeing him. She therefore made her physicians recommend her this cure for her imaginary maladies, and began to arrange for her journey. The newspapers were full of the preparations she was making for it; but, as ill luck would have it, the Pope took it into his head to die, which was most unfortunate for the lovers. The consequence was, that the Cardinal was obliged to go to Rome to be present at the Conclave,[2] and the Queen, who was only coming to France to be

[1] The waters of Bourbonne les Bains (near Autun, on the Loire, Bourgogne) have been celebrated since the times of the Romans, who built splendid baths and fountains there. "They are considerable for the admirable virtues which they have from a mixture of brimstone and bitumen, with some little salt, nitre, alum, and vitriol. These waters are light, without savour or smell, and being settled, they leave no thick matter. Though they are actually very hot, yet they do moderate the heats of the body, and quench thirst in a trice better than any cooling tisane. They agree well with the stomach, strengthen the weakened sinews, cure palsies, sciatics, rheumatisms, dropsies, and ease the gout, and are also a remedy against lingering poisons. They have, moreover, a specific virtue against the barrenness of women, as hath been often found by experience."—(Jeremy Collier, *Hist. Dict.*)

[2] "The conclave or assembly of the cardinals, by which, when a vacancy occurred in the papal see a new Pope was elected, was instituted by Gregory X at the council of Lyons, the fourteenth general council A.D. 1274. It received its name from a gloomy apartment in the Vatican, called the Conclave, in which the cardinals were shut up to nominate the new Pope on the tenth day after the death of the former occupant of the see. If the election was not made in three days the cardinals were only allowed a single dish at dinner and at supper, and after the eighth day received only a small allowance of bread, water, and wine. John XXI suspended the operations of the conclave, and, after the death of Nicholas IV, an interval of two years and three months elapsed before a successor was elected in the person of Peter Morone, who took the title of Cœlestine V, 5th July 1294. It was, however, re-established. Gregory XV in 1621, and Urban VIII in 1625, issued bulls for the regulation of the conclave."—(Townsend, *Manual of Dates.*)

near him, abandoned the journey. As it was stated in the newspapers that she had disembarked because the wind was unfavourable to her, very few people were aware of the actual facts of the case. Nevertheless, the Cardinal on his return to Rome went to Languedoc, and, as he was fondly attached to his sister, Madame de Castres, and enjoyed being at Montpellier, he generally lived there all the time he was in Provence, and it was also there that he met the beautiful Mademoiselle Gevaudan.

This young lady came from Nîmes;[1] she had a sister at Montpellier married to a president, and it was to this sister that her parents sent her, to cure her of a love-affair in her own town which did not meet with their approval.

The Cardinal fell in love with her the moment he saw her, but, as *she* was already in love with some one else, and was quite aware besides that the Cardinal's passion for her was unlawful, he would have run the risk of wasting many a sigh on her if the avarice of the president's wife had not helped him to find the way to her sister's heart. This woman, named Madame de Mariotte, is possessed of extraordinary genius; she would be quite capable of governing a kingdom. She understands every language, knows all the sciences, and better

[1] Nîmes (the ancient *Nemausus*) 30 miles N.E. of Montpellier, in the department of Gard. It was a great Roman centre of commerce and wealth, and possesses fine ruins and a noble cathedral. Nîmes was remarkable for its connection with Huguenot history, and is the birthplace of Nicot, who introduced tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum*) into France.—(*Trans.*)

than all that, knows what is best for her own interests.

After having discussed politics with the Cardinal, she wormed his secret out of him, promised to help him on in his love-affair, which, after certain negotiations, she brought to a conclusion just as if she had been making a treaty of peace between two crowned heads. The Cardinal made a conquest of the beauty, and President de Mariotte's wife became possessor of several large sums of money, presented to her by the Cardinal.

Besides the money he gave her, he afforded her facilities and means to make more; and, as all the trade of the province comes through the canal, and none of it free of duty, the president's wife soon picked up somehow immense sums of money.

Now, Mademoiselle Gevaudan, being under the guardianship of this sister, was more afraid of her than she was of thunder, and took care not to discuss any of the above interesting matters with her, but contented herself with the Cardinal's presents of fine clothes and jewellery, until at last certain occurrences opened her eyes. It came to her knowledge that, thanks to the Cardinal's generosity, her sister had managed to marry one of her daughters very well, so she began to plot a little for herself. She insisted on having her own furniture, and her own plate with a private mark on it; ending by building a house, which was magnificent, thanks again to the Cardinal's liberality.

It is built on land belonging to the Huguenot

Church, and there is not a mansion in Paris or a palace in Genoa which is more beautiful. All the splendours of every art have been combined in this residence, and the sumptuous furnishing of it is equally magnificent.

Madame de Mariotte noticed all the outlay lavished on this house without any regret, as she felt convinced that it would some of these days come to her or to her family; she was too shrewd to alienate herself from a sister whom she regarded in the light of a veritable "milch cow," so making use of the influence that she had acquired over her, she induced her to let her (Madame de Mariotte) live with her. The Cardinal was also desirous of her doing so, as he recognised that it was to her he owed all the happiness of his life.

However, his *amours* made a terrible scandal.

A brother of La Gevaudan, who felt that his honour had been insulted by all this, went to his father and mother, and told them all about it; and these good folks sent him off to Montpellier to find out the truth.

But the shrewd wife of the president bribed him to keep silence by getting him a major's commission in a company of dragoons at Narbonne. She carried out the same measures with other relations, and conferred benefits on them which cost *her* nothing, and bound them to her own interests.

But all that did not prevent society from chattering, nor the poets from making a string of satires.

One of them, named Vitral, who was a riding-

master at Montpellier, lost a thousand crowns of salary that he got from the town for teaching riding, on account of having composed verses on the above subject which were rather *too* descriptive!

About this time the Comte de Ganges (who had just restored to his nephew his father's confiscated estates) arrived at Montpellier, and, in spite of everything that he was told about La Gevaudan, and all that he could see for himself, fell violently in love with her, and proposed to her.

The president's wife feared that this marriage would turn out to her own disadvantage, so she did everything she could to hinder it; this did not prove very difficult, as the young lady did not at all admire her suitor; but, as events turned out shortly after, the two ladies were only too glad to summon him back again.

Madame de Mariotte, who had hitherto worked so judiciously for her own interests, overreached herself in an essential particular. Monsieur de Baville, who is Intendant of this province, and (as you know) a son of the late Monsieur de Lemoignon, senior President of Paris, came to Montpellier, and there met a young and lovely lady named Madame Daudessan, and fell deeply in love with her; but, as he is very religious (!), he would not descend so low from his pedestal as to make love to her, but thought it was more proper to make her lady-companion to his wife.

Circumstances helped him on greatly in this. Madame de Baville is a good creature, who does

everything her husband wishes, so Madame Daudessan became her inseparable companion, and they lived together as one family.

The husband, who is a pig-headed man, and never sees anything wrong where he does not want to see it, saw no objection to this, and the public, blinded by his outward show of devotion, and by Madame de Baville's infatuation for her rival, could not get to the bottom of the mystery, until Madame de Mariotte (jealous because *she* too had not a lady-companion!) became desirous that this *amour* should become public property, and be gossiped about like those of her sister, in which she knew that she was considered to have played a most abominable *rôle.*

To succeed in this she sent certain information to Holland, and some time afterwards a newspaper made mention of the amours of Monsieur de Baville and Madame Daudessan.

The crafty Intendant concealed his mortification, and set himself to work to discover who could have played him such a trick. In short, he managed so well that the manuscript, written in Madame de Mariotte's own hand, was sent back to him from Holland.

As soon as he discovered the author of this deed, he determined to revenge himself; and was so prompt about it that, even before she heard the roar of the thunder, the unfortunate Gevaudan was struck by the lightning in the shape of a *Lettre de Cachet* for her imprisonment. The Cardinal, in

despair, hurried off post-haste to ward off this blow, and threw himself at the King's feet, imploring him to spare the young lady, and to overwhelm him with disgrace rather than imprison her. But the King having been already fully informed, refused to listen to him, and the Cardinal could think of nothing better to do than to advise his mistress to marry the Comte de Ganges as soon as possible. Madame de Mariotte, who also recognised the necessity of this, dared no longer offer any opposition, and the Comte was too deeply in love not to agree to it also. So Mademoiselle Gevaudan became Comtesse de Ganges, and found herself protected from the insults of her enemies under the mantle of Hymen, which one might liken unto the mantle of Charity, as it so often "covereth a multitude of sins!"

This marriage damaged the Comte greatly. It might have been supposed that his wife's enormous wealth had tempted him, if he had not already given a great proof of disinterestedness by restoring to his nephew all his confiscated estates.

People also thought that Mademoiselle Gevaudan was very courageous to enter into a family which assassinated persons on mere suspicion, as the things *she* has done have gone *far* beyond suspicion. A hundred insults were hurled at them; amongst others, some one on their wedding-night fastened on their front-door a portrait of a ram wearing a red leather cap on its horns, with these words inscribed beneath, "At the sign of the good old Ram of de Ganges," in reference to the sheep of that province, which are

considered some of the finest in the world. Monsieur de Ganges found that he was treated with contempt in the army, so he left the service, and to satisfy his wife's vanity bought a provincial vice-royalty and the Governorship of the city of Carcassonne,[1] where he intended to settle with his wife, in order to take her away from Madame de Mariotte, with whom he was not at all satisfied; but Madame de Ganges set herself against this, and the result was that they quarrelled. He thereupon left his wife (who took no pains to restrain him from so doing, as she had never loved him) and went to lodge at an inn with the sign of the "Red Cap," and this drew upon him a thousand other jokes. At last, overcome by numerous and various mortifications, he left Montpellier and followed his eldest brother into his second exile. His wife was delighted to be rid of him, but the Cardinal was furious at the divorce. Long years of familiarity had worn out his affection for the lady; his own bad health gave him serious anxiety, and, by I know not what coincidence, his horoscope proved true in every particular.

The Cardinal was attacked in his sixty-third year by an apoplectic fit, from which he would never have recovered if he had not remembered something that the man had predicted to him, namely, to take the precaution, in proper time, to have himself

[1] Carcassonne, on the Grand Canal and the Aude, in Languedoc, and principal town of a little district called Les Carcasses. It has a fine cathedral and a castle. The town is a very ancient one, and was mentioned by Pliny; it was known variously as *Carcasso*, *Carcassum Volcarum*, *Tectosagum*.—(*Trans.*)

watched at night; and it was to this precaution that he owed the assistance he received at his attack, to which he would certainly otherwise have succumbed.

The ladies here were greatly upset by it, but as they had already feathered their own nests through him, they consoled themselves easily for anything further that might happen.

There! madame, is what I promised to tell you; some other time you shall hear more about it.

In hopes of a reply, I remain, etc.

LETTER XII

REPLY FROM HER FRIEND

The Duchesse de —— —Her only rival—Mademoiselle d'Armagnac —Monsieur de Barbésieux—The Princesse de Clèves—Indiscretions and confessions—Madame de Châtillon—The Duc d'Uzès—The Marquis d'Alègre—The Duc d'Elbœuf—Monsieur de Barbésieux's intrigues—Jealous husbands, fathers, and lovers —Madame de Barbésieux—Poison—The basin of soup—Saved! —The Archbishop of Cambrai—An unlucky family—Monsieur de Seignelai—Monsieur Colbert—An unfortunate marriage—A bad-tempered man—A box on the ears and its results—Madame de Seignelai dies—The Comte de Marsan—The Marquis de Matignon—Monsieur d'Armagnac—The Comte de Namur—Real friendship requires no protestations—Nîmes and its antiquities—The Abbé Fléchier, Bishop of Nîmes—Mademoiselle de Scudéri—Her wit and poetry—Her lady-secretaries—Her deafness—Her great age—China-collectors and their mania.

PARIS.

MADAME,—The place where you are living seems quite a "Land of Adventure;" such charming ones as you have related to me never happen here. There is nothing going on here except that affair of the Duchesse de —— which is now making a great talk at Court.

This lady has met no rival there more beautiful than herself, except Mademoiselle d'Armagnac.[1]

[1] Mademoiselle d'Armagnac was probably a relative or daughter

You may imagine that in a Court as gallant as ours she has not failed, aided by all the advantages she possesses, to make a number of conquests.

Monsieur de Barbésieux, the Minister of War, was one of her first adorers, and he has had many imitators; but what has surprised every one extremely is the strange confession that the lady made to her husband, far worse than the one said to have been made by the Princesse de Clèves; she declared that remorse had induced her to do so, and confessed that there had been no limits to her infidelities, and that her own mother was to blame for having urged her on to this misconduct.

The unfortunate husband, startled at a confession to which he would much rather not have listened, could not restrain his anger, and showed such resentment towards his mother-in-law that he flew into a fit of passion with her and betrayed the cause of it.

Everybody blamed the Duchesse de ——'s conduct and still more her indiscretion. They say that it was pique for a love affair that induced her to make this startling confession..

She had arranged a little party of four with Madame de Châtillon, and their lovers were to meet them in the evening at the Palais Royal, where the two ladies would be awaiting them. But only the lover of Madame de Châtillon appeared that evening, and the Duchesse de —— was obliged to keep watch for them.

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of the Duc de Nemours, whose family name was D'Armagnac.—(*Trans.*)

She was so piqued at this, that to retaliate on her lover, whom she thought faithless, she resolved to give him up to her husband's resentment.

Accordingly she confessed to him what he would much rather not have known, and it was at once published at Court and also in the city. So nothing is talked about now in society but her love affair with the Marquis de Barbésieux.

Monsieur de Barbésieux had married, firstly, a daughter of the Duc d'Uzès, by whom he had one daughter; he married secondly a daughter of the Marquis d'Alègre.[1] The latter lady is young and pretty, and a very suitable object for the aims of such noble lords as had been irritated by the gallantries of Monsieur de Barbésieux.

The Duc d'Elbœuf,[2] who had the greatest cause for complaint against him, was the first to appear; he is one of the most fascinating men in the world, not only because he knows so well *how* to please, but because he is able to persuade everybody that *they* are delighted with him.

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[1] This was probably the Maréchal d'Alègre, who died in 1733.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Charles III de Lorraine, Duc and Marquis d'Elbœuf, Governor of Picardy, born 1620, of remarkable talents but unbounded depravity of morals, married, firstly, 7th March 1648, Anne Elizabeth de Lannoy, widow of Henri du Plessis, Comte de la Rocheguion; secondly, Elizabeth de la Tour d'Auvergne, eldest daughter of Frédéric Maurice de la Tour, Duc de Bouillon. By his first wife he had Charles de Lorraine, born 2d November 1650, and Anne Elizabeth de Lorraine, married at Bar-le-Duc, 27th April 1669, to Charles Henri, Duc de Vaudémont. By his second wife he had Marie Eléonor, born 14th February 1658; Françoise Marie, born 5th May 1659, married 1677 to Monsieur de Vivonne; Henri, born 7th August 1661; and Louis, born 8th September 1662.—(*Trans.*)

He remembered that Monsieur de Barbésieux had once robbed him of a mistress and had made jokes at his expense; so he resolved to revenge himself on him, and annoy him in every possible way. He met Madame de Barbésieux, but whether she was amiable or haughty I cannot say; anyhow he declared openly that he was in her good graces: this was quite enough to irritate Monsieur de Barbésieux, and he flew into a violent rage with his wife.

The Duc d'Elbœuf, who had not intended to push matters so far, greatly regretted having brought such division into their household, and in order to try and remedy it went to the King and swore that nothing that could alarm the most rigid virtue had ever passed between Madame de Barbésieux and himself; but he went so far as to confess that to vex the Marquis he had made mischief and spread gossip, which, even had it been true, would not have been of much consequence.

Although the King blamed him severely, he thought that he had by this confession soothed Monsieur de Barbésieux's spirit. The King sent for the latter, and himself told him all that he had just learned from the Duc d'Elbœuf; but it all went for nothing, the original gossip had made so much impression, that no one would believe anything that followed; and then he (Monsieur de Barbésieux) thought that perhaps the Duke's confessor had compelled him to make this apology, and imagined that matters *had* reached a criminal point, and that that was the reason why the confessor had interfered.

He found that there were plenty of other people of the same opinion as himself, because it is always so much more easy to believe in evil than in good. Thereupon, Monsieur de Barbésieux, listening only to his vengeance, and imagining that his honour (as well as his pride) was touched in this affair, resolved to dispatch his wife to another world. She was already far on the way to it, for all the grief she had gone through had made her dangerously ill.

It is said that one morning, when one of her maids was making her some soup, Monsieur de Barbésieux put into it a little of a certain powder, and ordered the lady's-maid to take it to her mistress. The woman felt extreme reluctance at giving it to her, suspecting very strongly that the powder was deleterious to health; but there was no possibility of disobeying Monsieur de Barbésieux, and the woman knew only too well that her own life would be endangered if she were to try and save her mistress's; so she was obliged to carry the soup in.

The Marquis followed her into his wife's bedroom, but all the anxious servant could do was to whisper to her mistress, as softly as she could, not to drink *all* the soup.

Madame de Barbésieux did not at first hear what the woman said to her, but at last, when she understood, she left half the soup in the basin, and for that reason it did not take effect so speedily. Madame de Barbésieux became

unconscious; the physicians suspected the cause, and the Marquis d'Alègre in despair at seeing her in this condition took her home with him, and complained to the King, who replied that, "as Monsieur de Barbésieux was in his service," it was impossible to believe him capable of the crime of which he was accused.

The Marquis was miserable at this reply, and still more unhappy at having offended the King by his complaint, and found a few days after that he had got into disgrace. The consequence is, that he will perhaps lose his daughter, who continues seriously ill, and his fortune too.

A most charming letter on this subject, from the Archbishop of Cambrai[1] to the Marquise d'Alègre, is going the round of society just now—you know how well the Prelate writes.

It has been remarked that the daughters of the D'Alègre family have never been fortunate as ministers' wives.

The first wife of the late Monsieur de Seignelai was one of them, and had a most unhappy life with him. As she was a great heiress, Monsieur Colbert had had his eye upon her for his son; but as Madame d'Alègre was not satisfied with this match, she set her face against it, and it was therefore necessary to gain the affections of the daughter: they found it difficult to accomplish this, as she was fully aware of Monsieur de Seignelai's bad temper, and when the King himself spoke to her about it,

[1] Fénélon.—(*Trans.*)

the young lady replied "that she would never be able to put up with the rudeness of a man who was her inferior."

The King assured her that he (Monsieur de Seignelai) would never show any to *her;* and that if she found the least cause for complaint against him, she had only to come and inform himself.

Mademoiselle d'Alègre, over-persuaded by the King, married Monsieur de Seignelai, in spite of the repugnance that her mother showed to the marriage, and Monsieur de Seignelai, who is, as every one knows, disagreeable, lost no time in exhibiting his vile temper.

One morning, when he was with his wife whilst she was dressing, he felt very hot, and took off his *perruque* and threw it on the toilet table; whereupon Madame de Seignelai, because it had upset her patch-box, or for some other reason, threw it on the floor; this rather haughty proceeding enraged Monsieur de Seignelai, and he took the liberty of boxing his wife's ears. That box on the ear had most unhappy consequences.

Madame de Seignelai complained of it to the King; the King sent for Monsieur Colbert, and showed such extreme displeasure at his son's conduct that Monsieur Colbert in despair went in search of Monsieur de Seignelai, and bestowed on him a thrashing which he took in very bad part.

Madame de Seignelai, who was *enceinte,* had a miscarriage and died, and thus by an accident Mon-

sieur Colbert had the mortification of being obliged to restore the enormous wealth that this marriage had brought into his family. These two examples show clearly that the D'Alègre young ladies are not fortunate with ministers: one is inclined to believe that their name has something to do with it, for Monsieur de Barbésieux lived very peacefully with his first wife, and Monsieur de Seignelai made a very happy marriage with his second, who is the daughter of the Marquis de Matignon; she has just been married again to the Comte de Marsan, a brother of Monsieur d'Armagnac.

When he went to request the King's consent to his marriage, his Majesty replied that "Madame de Seignelai would find a great difference in coming from a union with one of the rudest men in the world to be united to one who was the gentlest and most courteous of mankind;" this marriage turned out most happily.

No doubt the scandals which have been going about here regarding Madame de Seignelai have reached the provinces; it was said that the King had himself been in love with her, and that during her widowhood she gave birth to a son, who was styled the Comte de Namur; but there is not a word of truth in it, for Madame de Seignelai was in mourning for her husband at the very time that she was supposed to be carrying on the intrigue.

All these tales are trumped up by the persons you mentioned some time ago, who have

never looked at Court life except through a peep-hole; but those who know it more intimately are better informed as to what goes on there.

The book of the Archbishop of Cambrai has been condemned at Rome, and the Prelate received the news with admirable composure; he even drew up himself the paper of prohibition against its being read in his diocese.[1]

The Jesuits do not show the same moderation, for they inveigh against the members of the Foreign Missionary Society, who are trying to punish them in the same manner as *they* have punished Monseigneur de Cambrai.

There! that is about all that has happened here; but apart from this we must hold firmly to the friendship that we have for each other; for it seems to me that we have not been at much pains to renew our protestations on that score, and our letters have been more filled with other people's concerns. As for myself, I consider that I am quite a historian, I should never have expected so much from myself! It is you who have brought about this miracle; do continue, I beseech you, our little correspondence, it is so very amusing; what is the good of going on reiterating the same thing each time? repetitions are so wearisome, and so, I assure you, once for all, that I love you beyond all expression!

But you will not mind my telling you that I con-

[1] "Il se soumit sans restriction et sans reserve. Il monta lui-même en chaire à Cambray, pour condamner son propre livre. Il empêcha ses amis de le défendre."—(Voltaire, *Dict. Hist.*)

sider that you are taking tremendous strides in travelling from Avignon to Montpellier all at one leap, without stopping at Nîmes, which I know is half-way. I had hoped that you would give me a brief description of this town, so celebrated for its antiquity and for the magnificent monuments left by the Romans, which many centuries have not yet succeeded in destroying; and also how you managed on your first arriving at Avignon; I hoped to have had a more detailed account of that city and all its curiosities, and I will not excuse you from telling me about them.

I entreat you also to give me some news of the Abbé Fléchier,[1] who is Bishop there (at Nîmes); you know he is an old friend of mine, and I fancy you may have seen him in passing through Nîmes; you have far too much discrimination to miss the opportunity of making the acquaintance of a man of such celebrity and exalted learning.

I met Mademoiselle de Scudéri[2] the other even-

[1] Esprit Fléchier.—This distinguished man, valued for his learning and beloved for his merits and courteous, gentle disposition, was born at Pernes, near Avignon, 1632, of poor and humble parents, who, however, came from noble ancestry; his father was a tallow-chandler, and he was brought up by his uncle, Père Audibert, superior of the Order of the Christian Doctrine. He was firstly Bishop of Lavaur, then of Nîmes, in 1687. He died 16th February 1710.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Mademoiselle Magdaléne de Scudéri, born at Havre-de-Grâce, 1607, an eminent author and romancist, and one of the guests of the literary salon of the Marquise de Rambouillet. She was an intimate friend of Mazarin, Louis XIV, Queen Christina, Pellisson, and many other celebrated personages and savants of her time. She was a member of the Academy at Paris, and of the academy of Ricovrati at Padua. She wrote numerous volumes of dissertations, poems, and romances, the best known of the last being *Clélie*, in ten vols., and *Artamène*, or *Le Grand Cyrus*, also in ten vols.; but her novels,

ing, she had just written to the Prelate, and sang his praises so long that I thought she would never finish; it was almost as prosy as the odes of Sappho! She is just as witty as ever, and the poems she writes now, on every occasion, are as brilliant as those in *Clélie;* but as far as her body is concerned, our "Tenth Muse" is terribly bent; the first time I saw her I thought she resembled the sybil of Cumæ,[1] and indeed, like her, all that remains to her is her voice. I was never more surprised; I found in her room two or three young ladies, one of whom, after she had made me sit down, took pen and ink, and, seating herself at a table, began to write something on a paper, from time to time stopping and looking at me fixedly, and then at every word I said going on again with her scribbling.

I could not imagine what it was all about, and thought the young lady was taking a sketch of my face!

I was beginning to feel annoyed, when I noticed just then that as I finished speaking she handed the paper to Mademoiselle de Scudéri, who, after having looked at it, answered quite correctly all I had been saying; I thereby came to a conclusion that Mademoiselle de Scudéri was deaf, and the young lady had been writing down all I had said, so that

like those of her brother George, have sunk into oblivion. She died on 2d June 1701, aged ninety-four, deeply lamented for her talents, her wit, her hospitality and kindly heart.—(*Trans.*)

[1] Cumæ, near Naples, possesses a large grotto, supposed to have been the abode of a mysterious sybil or prophetess.—(*Trans.*)

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Mademoiselle de Scudéri might understand it and reply; this is the only sort of conversation that one can carry on with her at present.

Nevertheless, I was greatly gratified at having seen her, and posterity may hereafter congratulate me on it.

I can even boast of something further, for I had the good fortune (although I cannot account for it), of having taken her fancy, and she has written me several letters; she has even asked me to go and see her, and complains continually of "her dropsy" and other ailments, which she regards as incidental, and will not put them down to the score of the ninety-two years[1] that have rolled over her head! That is a weakness which I should not have expected to find in a strong-minded person; but of course everybody has his or her special weakness, and I think there is none more foolish than the way in which people rush after fashion. Things are pushed to such extremes now that, just because there is a rage for china, there are people who sink all their money in it, and run the risk of being ruined by their cat taking a false step. Every room a visitor enters now looks like a crockery-shop! One would think that the china-merchants had discovered the secret of inducing everybody to

[1] We are by this fact enabled to assign the date of the year to this letter (the reader having doubtless observed that neither those of Madame Du Noyer nor of her correspondent are dated or even signed). If Mademoiselle de Scudéri was ninety-four when she died in June 1701, we may conclude that the date of the visit of Madame Du Noyer's friend was either the end of 1697 or the beginning of 1698, when the old lady would have been ninety-two, as stated.—(*Trans.*)

turn to their own trade, judging by "the show" that people take the trouble of exhibiting in their rooms. I should like to know if every one is as crazy about it down in the country.—I remain, etc.

LETTER XIII

FROM MADAME DU NOYER TO HER FRIEND

Nîmes and its history—Its origin—The Basilica—Church of the Three Kings—The Amphitheatre—The Cathedral—Roman Eagles—Alaric, King of the Visigoths—The Temple of Diana—The Fountain—The Great Tower—Messieurs Guirand and Deiront—The Bishop of Nîmes, Monsieur Fléchier—Description of his character and talent—The Duc de Montausier—Monsieur de Turenne—The Bishop and the Huguenots—Monsieur Torci, Bishop of Montpellier—The Cardinal de Bonzi—His scandalous *liaison* with the Comtesse de Ganges—A sham repentance—The Bishop and the Comtesse—The *liaison* is broken off—Madame Du Noyer visits the Bernardine Convent at Vignogne—The Marquis de Calvisson and his sister—Madame de Bernis, mistress of the Bishop of Nîmes—Monsieur Regnac—He dabbles in black magic, and offers a human sacrifice to the devil—Madame Fucard—She strangles her husband—The Duchesse de Verneüil—The Marquis de Guissac and his wife—Her flirtations—The Baron d'Aumelas—Suspicious behaviour—The Marquis watches—Proofs—The treacherous lady's-maid—Four louis, or a pistol! The Marquise is trapped—Another offer, a glass of lemonade or a pistol!—Poisoned?—A tragical rehearsal—An unexpected dénouement—The De Bernis family—Monsieur de Tourville—Monsieur de Monpesac—The Marquis de Toiras—His marriage to Mademoiselle de Bernis—He goes to Flanders—Dies of a wound at the battle of Leuse—Birth of his posthumous child—A vain ambassador—The Marquis de Castellos-Rios—Love at first sight—The widower and the widow—The peace of Ryswick.

MONTPELLIER.

MADAME,—I am delighted to see that you are sensible enough to find compliments irksome; they are unworthy of women like yourself.

You *must* be quite sure of my affection; and if I judge your heart by my own, I shall never doubt you; so let us love each other immeasurably!

I accept your suggestion, and, to reply in my turn, in gambling parlance, as they say at *Lansquenet* "go on as before."

Now I will return to our little anecdotes; but to tell you about Nîmes, I must go a little farther back; I am pleased to do so, as *you* wish me to do it; and I quite admit that I was very foolish to pass over in silence a town which is at once so famous and so ancient. The general opinion is that it was founded by Nemausis, grandson of Noah, from whom it derived its name. Others declare that it was built by a son of the great Hercules, but all agree that it was one of the most renowned of the cities of the Gauls.

The Romans were long settled there, and delighted in embellishing it. The Emperor Antoninus[1] was born there. Adrian[2] erected a basilica there, as

[1] The Emperor Titus Antoninus Pius, born A.D. 86, succeeded the Emperor Adrian A.D. 138, died 7th March A.D. 161. A noble and benevolent ruler, a friend to the Christians, and an encourager of learning and the arts. He was also the author of a work in twelve books, entitled, *The Duty of a Good Prince*, and made beneficial alterations in the law of divorce. He was handsome, witty, amiable, and beloved of his people.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Adrianus, or Hadrian Cæsar, also called Publius Ælius, born 24th January A.D. 76, the adopted son of the Empress Plotina, widow of his predecessor Trajan. He was a warlike, learned, and benevolent

a mausoleum for the Empress Plotina, his benefactress, widow of Trajan. Connoisseurs consider it a most perfect work. Its Corinthian columns are extraordinarily beautiful. In short, to quote Scarron, "the Basilica is a *chef-d'œuvre* of the Romans, and a perfect example of their architecture."

The King made a present of it to the Augustine Fathers,[1] and it is now the Church of the Three Kings.[2]

Besides this monument, there is at Nîmes an amphitheatre which is one of the most perfect in the whole world; it is called in the district the Arena;

ruler, but horribly licentious in private life. It is said that he had such a marvellous memory that he could repeat a book after once reading it, and knew the names of every soldier and officer in his armies. He was also proficient in drawing, painting, music, mathematics, philosophy, poetry, grammar, and oratory. He abolished slavery and human sacrifice, but his cruelty to the Jews is a great stain on his character, and also his disgraceful desecration of sacred places in Jerusalem. He placed on the gate leading to Bethlehem a marble hog, on the hill of Calvary a statue of Venus, in the place of the Saviour's tomb a statue of Jupiter, and in the grottoes at Bethlehem established the corrupt cult of Adonis. Hadrian married Sabina, the grand-niece and heiress of Trajan; it is supposed that Hadrian poisoned her, others say that he ill-used her so brutally that she committed suicide, A.D. 138. On his return from building the great wall in Britain, 80 miles long, from the Solway Firth to the mouth of the Tyne, he stopped at Nîmes and erected the splendid Basilica (mentioned by Madame Du Noyer). His latter years were stained by cruelty and gross licentiousness, by drunkenness and murder. He fell ill of dropsy and chronic hemorrhage of the nose, and died at Baiæ, in Campania, on the 10th July A.D. 138, aged sixty-two years five months and seventeen days, having reigned twenty-two years and eleven months.—(*Trans.*)

[1] The Augustine Friars, also called in England Austin Friars, sometimes Eremites. The order is supposed to have been founded in 1256 by Pope Alexander IV.—(*Trans.*)

[2] The three magi, or kings from the East, who went to Bethlehem to greet the birth of the Saviour, whose names are said to have been Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, and whose bodies are supposed to be those shown at Cologne as relics.—(*Trans.*)

it was there that the combats between wild beasts and gladiators were held.

On the Cathedral Church may still be seen Roman eagles, whose heads have been broken off. It is said that this was done by order of Alaric,[1] to hand down to posterity the proofs of his victories.

I also saw what is called "the Temple of Diana;" it is outside the town, close to a fountain which supplies water to the whole of the inhabitants, and even grinds their corn! This temple, or rather ruin, is the admiration of visitors.

Some say that it is a temple of Vesta; others aver that it is even more ancient than Rome herself, and declare that it was erected in honour of Diana.

The proximity of the fountain rather bears out the latter theory; for, judging by her adventure with Actæon,[2] Diana was fond of bathing; be this, however, as it may, it is not worth the trouble of discussion, and I expect that the next gale will bring down this precious relic, of which, to speak candidly, I do not think much, no more than I do of their great tower,[3] which they say used to be enormously high,

[1] Alaric I, King of the Visigoths, conquered Rome A.D. 410, but spared the city on receiving a ransom of 5000 pounds of gold, 30,000 pounds of silver, 4000 silk garments, 3000 pieces of scarlet cloth, and 3000 pounds of pepper. He died at Cosenza, in Calabria, A.D. 410, and was buried in the bed of the river Busento, so that his remains might not be discovered by the Romans.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Actæon, a famous huntsman of mythology, son of Aristaus and Autonoe, daughter of Cadmus. Because he had accidentally come upon Diana whilst she and her nymphs were bathing, the goddess changed him, in her anger, to a stag, and he was devoured by his own dogs.—(*Trans.*)

[3] Called by the townspeople "La Tour Magne."—(*Trans.*)

and which is still lofty enough to be seen from a distance.

There! madame, that is all that I can tell you about Nîmes and its antiquities; if you want to learn any more about it you must please take the trouble to read what Monsieur Guirand[1] and Monsieur Deiront have written on that subject in their books entitled *The Antiquities of Nîmes.*

I would much rather talk to you about the Bishop; for I think that I am a better judge of a good sermon than of all these ancient buildings; and, to tell the truth, existing beauty pleases me better than any antiquities. To return to Monsieur Fléchier, I must tell you that he is the same as ever; namely, the most eloquent of mankind. I was present at the sermon he preached at the opening of the Provincial Parliament, and was charmed with it. In short, you can judge what his merits must be when, contrary to the usual proverb, he *has* honour in his own country, for the Abbé Fléchier comes from a little town called Perne, quite close to Avignon, and consequently not far from Nîmes.

I cannot tell you if his family is noble, but I *do* know that he is a great honour to it; in his youth he was a Father of the "Order of the Christian

[1] "Galliard Guirand or Guiran, a French advocate, counsellor of the court of Nîmes, where he was born at the commencement of the seventeenth century, and afterwards rose to be counsellor of state to the Prince of Orange. He published a *Historical and Chronological Register of the Seneschals of Nismes and Beaucaire;* an *Explanation of two Ancient Brass Coins struck at Nismes*, both works in 4to; and left behind a large collection of materials for the history of the same city, in manuscript. His death took place in 1680."—(A'Beckett, *Univ. Biog.*)

Doctrine," but some disappointment having embittered him against this mode of life, he requested to be unfrocked. After this he went to Paris in the household of the Duc de Montausier,[1] where his merits were appreciated, for the Duke, whose almoner he became, was governor to Monseigneur, and it was at Court that Monsieur Fléchier rose to eminence. His funeral oration on Monsieur de Turenne[2] contributed to this. Connoisseurs say that it was a specimen of the most finished eloquence; but as you have read it I need not allude to it any further. After having distinguished himself at Court for a long period, Monsieur Fléchier was made Bishop of Lavaur,[3] and afterwards of Nîmes.

The new converts, Huguenots, who are in great numbers in this town, were greatly pleased with him at the beginning; but politics afterwards got the better of his milder views, and he sometimes acted against his own inclinations in order to pander to and follow the example of his colleagues. I saw him when I was passing through Nîmes, and I see

[1] Charles de Sainte Maure, Duc de Montausier, Governor to the Dauphin son of Louis XIV, born 1610, died 17th May 1690; he was noble, learned, courteous, and brave, of pure life and unimpeachable integrity, and honoured and beloved by his king and country for his high abilities as a Provincial Governor, and his unbounded benevolence during the plague.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, Vicomte de Turenne and Maréchal de France, second son of Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, Duc de Bouillon, and the Princesse Elizabeth, daughter of Guillaume I., Prince d'Orange. He was born at Sedan 1611, and married in 1653, a daughter of the Maréchal Duc de la Force; he was killed by a cannon-ball 27th July 1675.—(*Trans.*)

[3] Lavaur, on the river Agout, department of Tarn; celebrated for its manufacture of silk damask.—(*Trans.*)

him here every day, for he is obliged to be in residence whilst Parliament sits.

People say that he does not exhibit as much cleverness in his conversation as he does in the pulpit; and there are a great many stories going about which would make anybody but himself ridiculous. However, he is at his ease when he is with intimate friends whom he is sure of, and it is delightful to hear him converse; there never was a more agreeable man. He related to me yesterday an anecdote about Monsieur Torci, Bishop of this city,[1] which seemed to me rather peculiar.

The Cardinal de Bonzi, whom I have already mentioned to you in preceding letters, was seized a short time ago with a fit of apoplexy; the Bishop of Montpellier went to see him, and afterwards carried the Holy Sacrament to him.

As this occurred during the sitting of the Parliament, of which the Cardinal is President, all the lords who composed the assembly gathered in his room, where a table had been arranged as an altar, and the Holy Sacrament placed upon it. As soon as the Bishop had elevated the Host for the adoration of those present, he approached the sick man, and said to him that, as he had scandalised the Province by his *liaison* with the Comtesse de Ganges,[2] he ought to make public repentance of it, and promise solemnly before God that in the event of his being restored to health he would break off entirely from the lady.

[1] Montpellier.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Comtesse de Ganges, née Mademoiselle Gevaudan.—(*Trans.*)

Thereupon, wilfully mistaking some ambiguous sign that the Cardinal chanced to make, he exclaimed in a loud voice that his eminence entreated pardon of God and of the Province for the scandal he had caused, and promised to break off his *liaison* with Madame de Ganges, to whom a priest was immediately sent off, as if from the Cardinal, forbidding her ever to come near the Palace again in future.

The Comtesse received the message calmly, merely contenting herself with saying to the priest that "she knew perfectly well who had sent it, and she should do just as she pleased in the matter!"

However, the Cardinal got over his apoplectic attack, and was exceedingly surprised to learn all that had happened during his illness, and the arrangements that had been made in his name; but, as he was extremely politic, he did not fail to thank the Bishop for his attention in having administered the sacrament to him; then, to show that he gave the lie to everything he was supposed to have said, he ordered his sedan chairmen to carry him to the house of the Comtesse de Ganges.

The Comtesse received him rather coldly, although she had no right to blame him for a thing in which he had taken no share; after some preliminary small talk, she said to him that she required country air to set up her health.

His Eminence made that the break between them, and she submitted to it, and went off immediately after to Valmagne, which is one of his abbeys.

Does he consider that polite or honourable? That is what Monsieur Fléchier related to me yesterday, far more interestingly than I have repeated it to you, but then, "every one cannot journey to Corinth!" We talked a great deal about you to the illustrious Prelate, and I showed him that part of your letter in which he is mentioned; he begged me to assure you that he has the most friendly feelings for you; and I flatter myself that he does me the honour of being *my* friend also. He has given me a great many pleasant introductions in this place.

I went the other day to Vignogne, a Bernardine Convent;[1] the sister of the Marquis de Calvisson is the Abbess of it, and all the nuns are young ladies of high rank: everything is most perfectly arranged for them, but they are much vexed that the house is not their own property; they have only got it on lease.

I asked them what prevented them from buying it, whereupon they told me a most extraordinary thing. "About twenty years ago" (said the charming Madame de Bernis, who is mistress of the Bishop of Nîmes),[2] "the proprietor of this house, who was named Monsieur de Regnac, resolved, after

[1] "Bernardines.—The Cistercians, a branch of the Benedictines, instituted at Citeaux in 1098, were reformed by Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, in Champagne, at the commencement of the twelfth century; from which circumstance they received the name of Bernardines. The second crusade was preached by Bernard, who was one of the most influential men of his time. He resolutely refused all ecclesiastical dignities, and is said to have founded one hundred and sixty religious houses. . . . From the colour of their habit, they were called white monks. There were nuns of this order."—(Townsend, *Manual of Dates.*)

[2] Esprit Fléchier.—(*Trans.*)

a long study of books on magic, to offer up a sacrifice to the devil; he had read therein that to be perfectly happy it was necessary that he should sacrifice the person whom he loved best in all the world; fortunately for his wife, she did not come under this category; besides, it was also necessary that the victim should be young, and the dreadful choice fell on a most lovely little boy not yet seven years old.

"Monsieur de Regnac shut himself up in his study, and sacrificed him after the manner of the heathens; that is to say, after he had cut his throat, he tore out his heart and entrails, and put them into a brazier; then he laid the disembowelled corpse on the table which had served him as an altar, and on which were also placed the volumes in which he had studied these horrible rites.

"As soon as he had accomplished this dreadful ceremony, he mounted his horse and rode away, taking the key of his study with him. However, a search was made everywhere for the little boy, and it was feared that he must have fallen into one of the wells, which are very deep about here; at last some one noticed that there was a putrid stench in the house. As the dreadful odour came from the study, of which the key was not forthcoming, the door was broken open without hesitation, and then was seen the sad and awful spectacle that I have just described.

"In the books was found the explanation of it all; but they never caught the perpetrator of that

detestable crime; however, in spite of this, judgment was pronounced against him; he was condemned to be executed, and his property was confiscated, and that is the reason why the nuns are unable to purchase the house for themselves.

"It is called 'The House of the Sacrifice,' but," continued Madame de Bernis, "I hope that the sacrifices which are now offered up here daily have sufficiently purified it."

"I am quite sure they have," I rejoined; "but I must confess that I should be very nervous if I came to live here."

"So were we in the beginning," she answered; "but we do not think any more about it now, and should be very vexed if we had to leave."

After this she told me that "just about the same time as the above, a lady of high rank, named Madame Fucard, had had her husband strangled. Also, that a husband, on account of some jealous suspicion or other, cut his wife's throat, and that so many tragical occurrences had so alarmed the Duchesse de Verneüil,[1] who was in the province at that time, that she looked upon Montpellier as one

[1] Wife of Henri, Duc de Verneüil, who was the son of Henri IV by his mistress, Catherine Henriette de Balzac, Marquise and Duchesse de Verneüil, and daughter of François de Balzac, and his second wife, Marie Touchet, Dame de Belleville, ex-mistress of Charles IX of France. Catherine had extorted a promise from Henri IV that he would marry her; but when he threw her off, wearied with her exacting imperious temper, and married Maria di Medici, she intrigued with Spain to dethrone him, and place the Duc de Verneüil on the throne of France. Catherine died in exile in 1633, aged fifty-four.—(*Trans.*)

of those countries which produced monsters." "At any rate, madame," I replied, "there are some very handsome people in it now;" and then, as I was anxious to turn the conversation to some less gloomy subject, I entreated the ladies to tell me some other more cheerful story.

"With great pleasure," continued Madame de Bernis. "The Marquis de Guissac has just made a sensation in society, which I am sure will amuse you. This nobleman married last year a young and beautiful lady, who was, what is better still, an heiress. Nothing seemed wanting to his happiness; he had been her lover before he became her husband, and if he had not become such a jealous one, his happiness would doubtless have been perfect; but—is there such a thing as that in this life? The Marquis de Guissac, whom every one envied, fell into the deepest melancholy. I have already told you that his wife was beautiful, and the ladies here are not wanting in cleverness; and as you may imagine, a young lady, so carefully educated as she was, would not be wanting in cleverness either, and she had plenty of admirers.

"Most of the women here do not think anything wrong except that which is actually *sin*, and therefore care very little what construction is put upon things which in other countries might be wrongly understood.

"Acting on this principle, the Marquise de Guissac felt no scruples in accepting the attentions of the Baron d'Aumelas, who was a very handsome young

fellow. Every day there were little picnics, or walks, or presents, until her husband, impatient at all this intriguing, and not finding any proofs sufficiently strong to admit of his lodging complaints against his wife, made up his mind to watch her more closely, and to find her out in some indiscretion. This he managed so successfully that at last he discovered that she was carrying on a correspondence with the Baron d'Aumelas. Although he was certain of this, he wished 'to make assurance doubly sure,' and, as he felt convinced that his wife's maid was a confidante in this intrigue, he did all he could to bribe her; but, not succeeding therein, he resolved to follow her every time that her mistress sent her into town. He had not long to wait before he discovered what he wanted to know, and what he would much rather *not* have discovered; for he saw the lady's-maid talking to the Baron in the street, and hiding in her bosom a letter that the young man had just handed to her.

"It was more than enough to throw the Marquis into despair, and he did not wait to see more. He hurried home again, and awaited the return of the lady's-maid; and as soon as she came back, dragged her into a parlour downstairs, and after having demanded from her, in an authoritative tone, the note that had just been given to her, offered her four louis[1] with one hand, whilst with the other he

[1] A gold coin, properly called a louis d'or, first coined in the reign of Louis XIII, 1641. They ceased to be legal in France in 1726. They were re-established in 1814, by Louis XVIII, and again abolished by Napoleon I.—(*Trans.*)

pointed a pistol at her, and swore that he would blow out her brains.

"The wretched servant threw herself, quaking with terror, at her master's feet, and gave him the fatal letter, promising never to meddle again in such matters.

"'That is not enough,' said the Marquis, as he gave her the four louis; 'as you have kept a secret for your mistress, I want you now to keep one for *me;* beware that you ever betray what has just passed between me and you. Beware!' he repeated again, as he once more pointed the pistol at her; after which he left her, to go and meditate on his revenge. The letter did not tell him much, but made him feel terribly suspicious, for it expressed passion in the tenderest terms.

"The Marquise did not consider that she failed at all in her duty to her husband in acting thus; and as she strictly guarded all his *conjugal rights*, and never allowed them to be infringed upon, she thought that there was nothing criminal in her other actions. Impressed with this idea, she felt not the least shame for her misconduct, when she saw her husband enter her room in a furious rage; in one hand he held the pistol, in the other a large glass, full of lemonade.

"'Here, madame!' he cried, as soon as he had closed the door, 'it is extremely warm, so I have brought you something cooling, which you must drink off at once, please.' Then as he saw her shrink from him, he pointed the pistol at her, and said she must choose between the two.

"The wretched woman called to mind the tragic death of Madame de Ganges,[1] and after pouring out many futile entreaties, determined, in this cruel alternative, to drain the cup; but as soon as she had swallowed half of its contents, the Marquis snatched it from her hand.

"'That is enough!' he exclaimed, and drank the remainder. 'I do not intend you to die alone; I will follow you to the other world, so that I may reproach you eternally for your faithlessness.'

"The Marquise swore to him solemnly that she had never been unfaithful to him, and implored him, as a last favour, to allow her to have a confessor, and to send for her father and mother, so that she might have the consolation of seeing them before she died. This he granted her.

"Her father and mother found the whole household in confusion, and their daughter *in extremis;* the horrors of death were already stealing over her countenance. On a bed near her, lay her husband, who seemed prostrate with weakness; it was indeed a sad sight for the father and mother!

"Whilst these good people were lamenting over their daughter, the confessor besought her to repent.

"She replied that 'as she had only a few moments left her to live, she desired to make a public confession, for the consolation of her parents, and for the sake of her own reputation,' upon which she

[1] *See* letter iii.—(*Trans.*)

began to confess aloud all the sins she had committed.

"Her husband, who was listening very attentively, was much delighted when he heard no mention of those he had suspected, and as soon as the dying beauty had received absolution, he turned towards his father-in-law and mother-in-law, saying to them:—

"'Dry your tears, your daughter has caused *me* so much grief that she may well pardon me for the fright I have given her. I am delighted to learn her innocence at a time when dissimulation holds no sway over her. My mind is at rest now. Take courage, madame,' he continued; 'there was no poison in what we both drank just now; do not be afraid.'

"The Marquise did not know what to think; she had made so sure that she had been poisoned, that the mere force of her imagination had made her feel all the agonies which are experienced in similar cases. But as soon as she had been assured that there was nothing the matter with her, she became as well as possible, and the scene ended much more agreeably than might have been expected. I am quite sure," added Madame de Bernis, "that you never expected such a *dénouement* as *that*."

"No, indeed, madame," I replied. "I felt rather distressed that you were going on from one tragedy to another, after having promised me something amusing, and I must confess that I was very agreeably surprised at the termination of the story;

for I was sorry to think of that unfortunate little woman dying for such a venial sin."

"She is now on such good terms with her husband," continued Madame de Bernis, "that to avoid giving him any further pain, she has reformed all the irregularities of her conduct.

"The Baron d'Aumelas has been formally cut by her, and no *billets-doux* are now sent to the beauty."

I thanked Madame de Bernis for her kindness in relating all these anecdotes to me; and then, after having bid farewell to the community, I went to spend the evening with the Bishop of Nîmes, to whom I gave an account of my visit.

"I am very glad," he said, "that you are pleased with Madame de Bernis; you would be no less so with the rest of her family," he added, "if you only knew them; their house is only an hour and a half's distance from Nîmes. I often go there, and I have never met more agreeable people. Madame de Bernis, mother of the charming nun of whom we have just been speaking, had four daughters and one son, all very handsome: two of the girls were put into a convent, and two kept at home; then, as the son died, the elder of these two girls became the heiress of the family, with an income of twenty-two thousand livres; which, joined to her personal qualities, caused her to be courted as one of the best matches in the province. Monsieur de Monpesac did everything he could to win her, and so also did Monsieur de Tourville, now

Maréchal de France,[1] and many others whom it is unnecessary to name, and whose wooing was unsuccessful. The young lady's heart had been bestowed from her girlhood on her cousin-german, the Marquis de Toiras, and she was too high-souled to let any change of fortune alter her, although, by the death of her brother, she would now be in a position to make a splendid marriage in point of rank. But she would never consent to do so; whatever her parents might urge as an inducement, she persisted in her resolution for twenty-two years, invariably declining every alliance that was proposed to her, but yet never failing in the respect she owed to her relations.

"Such constancy in woman is rare in our century, and she might have furnished Mademoiselle de Scudéri with a new heroine, but at last she met with her reward: for after the death of Monsieur de Bernis, the young lady's father, I persuaded her mother to withdraw all further opposition in the matter; so everything ended happily for all parties; and I bestowed the nuptial benediction. Every one shared in the happiness of the lovers; but alas! how transient are the pleasures of this life. One spring saw the birth and death of the happiness of the husband and wife.

[1] Anne Hilarion de Cotentin, Comte de Tourville, admiral and marshal of France, was born at Tourville, near Coutances in Normandy, in 1642. "He first distinguished himself against the Algerines, and afterwards at Palermo, against the Spanish fleet. He defeated, in 1690, the fleets of England and Holland, but in the battle of La Hogue, two years after, he lost fourteen of his largest ships. He died 28th May 1701, aged fifty-nine."—(L'Emprière's *Biography*.)

The Marquis de Toiras was too brave to remain with his wife when duty called him elsewhere; so, only three days after their marriage, he departed to join Monsieur de Luxembourg in Flanders, where the praises showered on him by the king some time previously cost him his life; for, to show that he deserved them, he performed heroic deeds at the battle of Lens, and there he received his death-blow. He was carried into his tent wounded, a broken sword-blade sticking in his breast. When he was told that he would most likely die as soon as it was drawn out, he expressed a wish, before enduring this operation, to confess himself; this done, he asked for paper and ink, and with a trembling hand wrote a few words to me, recommending his beloved wife to my care, and begging me to comfort her, and not to leave her alone in her affliction. After this he gave instructions that his heart was to be embalmed and taken to his wife. He would have liked to have written her his last adieux; but his strength failed him, and he was obliged to resign himself to the hands of the surgeons. Just what had been predicted happened; such a tremendous gush of blood followed on the extraction of the broken sword-blade, that the poor Marquis de Toiras was suffocated.

"Never was a man more troubled than myself when I learned the sad news. I knew not how I should announce it to the poor widow. I foresaw the condition in which she would be, and as she was also supposed to be *enceinte*, I feared that the

consequences might be alarming. However, I was obliged at last to make up my mind to break the news to her. I travelled from Nîmes post haste to Bernis: I told Madame de Toiras that her husband was wounded, and I ventured to prepare her for the worst; but she, without giving way to wailing and tears (the usual resource of her sex), promptly ordered a post-chaise to be got ready, and determined to start at once to rejoin her husband in Flanders, and nurse him. I was horrified at her plan, and as there was no other way of preventing her, I was obliged of course to reveal the truth to her. She bore the shock with heroic fortitude, without allowing the least word of complaint to escape her. Although her grief was overwhelming, it was dumb; she even took every precaution necessary for her own health, and for that unborn pledge of her husband's love. In due time she gave birth to a little daughter, who, if she lives, will be a great heiress; for Madame de Toiras will not hear of marrying again. She resides at Bernis in the quietest manner with her mother, and with Mademoiselle de Bernis her sister, who is a very sensible young lady.

"I often go and see them, that is, as often as my occupations allow me. Their only pleasure is to take occasional drives out of the village, along the road from Nîmes to Montpellier. This road is a very frequented one, and Madame de Toiras related to me some time ago a rather amusing adventure which happened to her with the Marquis de Castellos-Rios,

the Spanish ambassador. This minister was travelling from Madrid to Paris by long stages, with all the usual pomp and stateliness of his nation, when, on the way from Montpellier to Nîmes, he met on the road some elegantly dressed ladies, attended by several lackeys; they were strolling along, whilst their carriage followed them behind. He felt convinced that they were ladies of rank, and his Spanish vanity led him to imagine that the ladies had come to meet him on his way and pay him the homage which he supposed was his due. Convinced of this, he descended from his coach to thank them for their courtesy, and addressed himself to Madame de Toiras. He invoked heaven for compliments, after the fashion of his own country, in order to show her how much he appreciated her kindness in coming to meet him on his journey. The Marquise was too polite to correct him in a mistake in which he seemed to take so much pleasure; in fact, he seemed so imbued with the idea that they had done all this for him, that he hardly knew how to express his gratitude. Besides, he was charmed with the wit and personal appearance of the Marquise, and perceiving that she was in mourning, he took the liberty of asking her the reason. As they walked along together for some time, she employed the moments in relating to him all her history. The ambassador was doubly touched by it as he too was in the same case: he had just lost a wife whom he had loved for fifteen years, and whom he had only won after numerous obstacles, and

after duels with a number of rivals; in short, he had triumphed, and he was at the climax of joy when his beloved wife died in giving birth to a fine boy.

"It is certainly curious," said the Bishop of Nîmes to me, "that there should have been such a coincidence in their circumstances. The Spaniard was so touched by the latter, and by the charms of the lady, that he proposed to her that they should share each other's sorrows, so that they might afford each other reciprocal consolation, adding, that as *she* had a daughter and *he* a son, they could, by a double marriage, extend their union beyond the tomb. Although Madame de Toiras was not of the same opinion, she thanked him nevertheless very warmly for his proposal; and, making her mourning a plea for not accepting or refusing it at once, she sent him away the happiest and most adoring of men. He entreated permission to write to her from Paris, and it was whilst showing me one of his letters that Madame de Toiras related to me what I have just told you."

As soon as the Bishop of Nîmes had finished his story I thought it was time to end my visit, and I think it is time now that I should finish this letter. I hope it will amuse you. I wish I had some news to tell you, but that would be like tracing a river to its source since you yourself are the spring. Tell me, therefore, all that is going on in Paris, and how the Conference of Ryswick is to end; people here are very much afraid that it will be

like the council held by the rats, described by La Fontaine.

Every one is longing for peace; let me know if there is any hope of it, and believe me always, madame, your very humble and very obedient servant.

LETTER XIV

REPLY FROM HER FRIEND

The Prince de Conti—Elected King of Poland—Death of King John Sobieski—The Peace of Ryswick—Prince Charles, Archduke of Austria—William III Prince of Orange—James II of England—The Duc de Savoye—The Duchesse de Bourgogne—The Duchesse de Ludes—Monsieur Corbian—His extravagances—A rich widow—Madame Mouillet—An ill-assorted marriage—The widow will not stand any nonsense—Monsieur Corbian keeps late hours—"I don't know you!"—Locked out—An awkward predicament—Monsieur Corbian loses his better-half—Monsieur Boissergent and his three wives—Dreadful scandal!—One husband too much!—He is got rid of—An inconvenient witness—A good riddance—The guilty go unpunished—The innocent suffer—A secret of the confessional—Betrayal—Monsieur Boulanger—An extravagant wife—The Gräfin von Fürstenberg—The Marquis de Gravel—The Cardinal von Fürstenberg—The Marquise's missions to Cologne and Poland—The Marquis de Béthune—John Sobieski and his queen—The Marquis d'Arquien—The mystery of the Queen's birth explained—Madame d'Arquien—The Marquise de Béthune—The Queen's vanity and intrigues—The Marquis de Béthune—Dangerous flirtations—Complications—Some awkward love-letters—Secret flight of the Marquis de Gravel—His disgrace—The Cardinal de Bonzi—The Prince de Conti's servant—A generous master.

PARIS.

MADAME,—I should have replied to you long ere this, if an illness (which, however, was not serious) had not prevented me from doing so.

I had no sooner arrived at my country-house, which I have only just finished arranging, than I heard that we are about to lose the Prince de Conti. He has just been elected King of Poland. You are doubtless aware that this crown is bestowed by election; therefore, as the throne has become vacant by the death of Sobieski, the whole army and an assembly of the nobility of the country have unanimously elected the Prince de Conti. He is to leave at once to take possession of the crown; and although the Elector of Saxony[1] disputes it, and has even turned Catholic so as to remove every obstacle that might stand in the way of his election, people still hope that the Prince de Conti will gain the day.

The King *appears* to take the part of the latter very strongly. I wonder if he is sincere in that? Events will show if he is, and I will take care to let you know.

Our Plenipotentiaries have assembled in great force at Ryswick,[2] and those who think that nothing more will be done than there was at the council held by the rats are very much out of their reckoning!

[1] Friedrich August I Elector of Saxony, elected King of Poland, born 1670, married (1692) the daughter of the Markgraf of Brandenburg-Culmbach, died of gangrene of the thigh, 1st February 1733, having reigned from the year 1697; he was a brave, wise, and benevolent ruler, but of licentious private life. He left one legitimate son, Friedrich August, and one illegitimate son by the lovely Gräfin von Koenigsmark, viz. the famous Maurice de Saxe.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Ryswick is a small village, two miles S.E. of the Hague, in the Netherlands. A pyramidal monument was erected there to commemorate the peace concluded in 1697 between France on one side and England, Germany, Holland, and Spain on the other.—(*Trans.*)

The King desires peace, and will surely establish it, whatever it may cost him. The interests of his people, who are worn out by the long-protracted war, impel him to this; but there are knowing persons who affirm that he is acting for his *own* interests, and that the Spanish Crown, on which he has long set his heart for one of his grandsons, is the true motive for his furtherance of the peace.

The good Charles of Austria,[1] it is said, is dying, and the King has need of friends and support to enable him to appropriate such a splendid inheritance.

Thus, if the assistance of the Prince of Orange is at this juncture necessary to him, he will doubtless acknowledge him as King of Great Britain, even after having treated him as a usurper, and in spite of the interests of King James; which shows plainly that we are always the dupes in these princely quarrels.

The Duc de Savoye[2] has just patched up his,

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[1] Charles II (styled of Austria) King of Spain, born 1661, succeeded his father Philip IV, 1665; during his minority the government of his dominions was entrusted to his mother Queen Anna Maria of Austria. His first wife was Marie Louise of Orléans, his second, Maria Anna of Bavaria, Princess of Neuburg. During his whole lifetime he suffered so continuously from physical and mental incapacity that he was at some periods of his reign almost an idiot. His natural disposition was amiable and benevolent, but he was quite uneducated and totally devoid of all knowledge of government. He died November 1, 1700, bequeathing his kingdom by will to Philippe, Duc d'Anjou, grandson of Louis XIV.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Victor Amédée François II, Duc de Savoie and first King of Sardinia, born 14th May 1666; son of Charles Amédée de Savoie, Duc de Nemours, and his wife Elizabeth de Vendôme. Succeeded his father, 1675. Married, 1684, Anne Marie d'Orléans, daughter of the Duc d'Orléans and the Princess Henrietta Maria of England. His long

to his own advantage, for, by the treaty that he has made in his own behalf he has got back all his estates, and his daughter has become Duchesse de Bourgogne. The Duchesse de Lude, whom the King has appointed first lady-in-waiting to the Princess, has gone to Savoy with a splendid suite, to conduct her here. But now let us get back to private matters, I have talked quite enough of political gossip and affairs of state.

A Bordeaux gentleman, named Corbian, who had been making a great figure here and living like a prince, had, at last, thanks to *Lansquenet*, become hopelessly involved in debt, and resolved to retrieve his fortune by marrying some wealthy widow; it was the only resource that remained to him, and his handsome person was a great assistance to him in this design. After having searched about for some time for some suitable person, he found one who would answer the purpose perfectly, and Madame Mouillet was the lady to whom "he breathed his vows."

She was neither young nor beautiful; but she was enormously rich, which was just what Corbian wanted.

Behold him then languishing with love beside her—it matters little to a Gascon if his sighs be sincere or false, and it is the same with his love-making, so Corbian played his part perfectly.

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reign of fifty-five years was disturbed by the wars with the Vaudois and the various intrigues attending the Spanish succession. After the death of his wife, he abdicated in 1730 in favour of his son Charles Emanuel. He married as second wife one of his mistresses, and died at the castle of Rivoli, near Turin, in 1732, aged sixty-six.—(*Trans.*)

He was good-looking, and the lady was not hard-hearted; besides she had not much time to lose, so she did not delay very long in making him happy: and in fact they *were* so, at the beginning of their married life.

Amongst several other privileges, the lady allowed him that of drawing from time to time on her bankers; but good fortune sometimes makes people careless, and Corbian no longer took any trouble to be amiable to his wife, and as soon as he found himself again "flush of cash," he renewed his former manner of life.

He was scarcely ever to be seen at home now; indeed he rarely returned there till nearly dawn, which last arrangement did not suit the lady at all.

"She had not married him," she said, "so that he should spend the whole night in gambling; she thought her fortune entitled her to be treated in a proper manner."

She continued to complain in this strain, but Corbian, who fancied he could always appease her when necessary, did not pay as much attention to her complaints as he should have done. The passion for gaming possessed him wholly, and he went on the same as ever; but he was very much startled, on returning home one morning at four o'clock, when, after having knocked a long time at his own door, a lackey appeared at one of the windows, and refused to let him in, bawling out to him: "I don't know you!"

Corbian did not know what to make of this

adventure, which would have resembled that of Amphitryon,[1] if he could have likened his wife to another Alcmena, only the result was not the same as in that case.

Meanwhile, the impatient Corbian went on knocking, till madame herself looked out, and after asking him "what he meant by hammering at her door at such an unheard-of hour, and scandalising the neighbours," she threatened to send for the police-commissary of the quarter, to teach him not to insult a widow.

At this word of *widow*, Corbian uttered a loud exclamation of amazement, and asked her "if she did not recognise him?"

But it was all in vain; the lady shut the window, and left him to shiver with cold in the street until daylight.

The following morning, Corbian sent some priests to argue with her; then some lawyers, but all to no purpose.

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[1] "Amphitryon was a Theban prince, son of Alcœus and Hipponome. His sister Anaxo had married Electryon, King of Mycenæ, whose sons were killed in a battle by the Teleboans. Electryon promised his crown and his daughter Alcmena to him who could revenge the death of his sons upon the Teleboans; Amphitryon offered himself, and was received on condition that he should not approach Alcmena before he had obtained a victory. Jupiter, who was captivated with the charms of Alcmena, borrowed the features of Amphitryon, when he was gone to the war, and introduced himself to Electryon's daughter as her husband returned victorious."—(L'Emprière's *Class. Dict.*) The old mythological legend goes on to say that when Amphitryon really returned, his wife refused to acknowledge him, and treated him as an impostor, and had him turned out of the palace with ignominy by his own servants, but she afterwards acknowledged him and restored him to her affections.—(*Trans.*)

She had taken the precaution, before making this rupture, to get hold of the register-book of the parish priest, and had torn out the page containing the entry of her marriage.

How she was able to manage this I cannot tell you; one would not think that for the sake of a bribe any priest would allow the register-books of his church to be tampered with; but it is, nevertheless, a fact that Madame Corbian *did* tear out the page, and after having burnt it, declared boldly that she was no longer married, and called herself once more Madame Mouillet.

Poor Corbian possessed no proofs, so he demanded that a court of inquiry should be instituted, to prove that they had lived together as husband and wife.

The lady made no opposition to this, and accused herself before the Court "of having had a criminal *liaison* with him," but she added that "the remorse of her conscience had induced her to break it off," and that "she thought that no obstacle ought to be put in the way of her desire for repentance." Such a declaration clinched the verdict of the judges, and all that remained to Corbian of his good fortune was the regret that he had now lost it, entirely by his own fault.

There is another affair going on here which is making a tremendous sensation; it is the trial of a man named Boissergent, who holds a high military appointment; he has just been arrested at the instance of one of his wives; I

say *one*, because he has been convicted of having *three*.

I saw him the other day at the *Conciergerie*,[1] and as I have always heard that polygamy was a hanging matter, I considered him as good as hanged; but there are many things in this world that one takes on trust, simply because one has heard them; and the latter comes under that head, for polygamy is only made a hanging affair by Molière; so the life of Boissergent is *not* in danger. But the only thing which embarrasses the judges is to decide what punishment they ought to inflict; for he *must* be punished in some way, and this will spin out the trial. For my part, if I were in their place I should have no hesitation about it. I should condemn Boissergent to live in the same house with all his three wives. I think they would make a fine disturbance together, and the poor devil would suffer as much as did he[2] who was once given over to the Harpies. That would positively be the most suitable punishment for him, and I cannot imagine a severer one. But now, here is a very different case.

About the time that Boissergent thought *three* wives scarcely *enough* for himself, a woman came to the conclusion that *one* husband was *too much* for her, and resolved to make away with him.

[1] One of the principal prisons of Paris.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Æneas, son-in-law of Priam, King of Troy, and son of Anchises and the goddess Venus. On his voyage to conquer Italy he was seized upon and plundered by the Harpies, or Harpylœ, three winged monsters with the face of a woman, the body of a vulture, and feet and arms armed with long claws; they were said to be the three daughters of the God and Goddess Neptune and Terra.—(*Trans.*)

She took the opportunity of doing this when all her household was absent, but, as it was absolutely necessary that she should confide in some one, she persuaded a sort of steward that she had to be accessory to the crime, and promised to reward him afterwards by giving him her hand in marriage.

The wretch consented to the bargain, whereupon his master was murdered during the time when, as I have already mentioned, they had sent all the servants out of the house, on some excuse or other; then the corpse was placed in a sack, and the wicked woman's accomplice took it up on his back; this done, they went together to the *Pont-Neuf*,[1] with the intention of flinging their burden into the Seine. But when the man turned himself about to do so he was dragged down by it into the river, for the good lady had *sewn the sack to his coat*, and thus spared herself all fear of the discovery of her crime.

She then returned home, where she lived quietly during six months, making inquiries all over the place for her husband. She declared that he had left home one evening, and that she could not understand what had hindered his return.

Everybody discussed the matter according to their own lights; but no one hit upon the truth, for not a soul suspected her.

At last, six months afterwards, during the time of the last Jubilee, the woman took it into her head

[1] The Pont-Neuf was commenced by Henry III in 1578, and completed in 1664, in the reign of Louis XIV.—(*Trans.*)

to go to confession, and accused herself of all I have just related.

The confessor thought the crime such an awful one that he felt himself compelled to deliver her up to justice.

The woman was imprisoned; but as she knew that no proofs could be discovered against her, she denied the deed.

Then the confessor was confronted with her, and was very much startled when he found the tables turned against himself.

The prisoner demanded that he should be punished according to the law, for having betrayed a confession, or as a calumniator for uttering such a thing, no matter where he had heard it, without sufficient proofs.

Thereupon the unfortunate priest was cast into prison, but still held to what he had said, and was condemned to be burnt alive. The laws are stringent in this matter, for a confessor is sworn to secrecy unless the person of the King is threatened.

The woman was released, and declared innocent until others should come forward to accuse her.

The confessor has appealed to the Parliament, but no one knows yet how it will all end.

All this proves to us what the proverb says: "The innocent are sometimes hanged;" and also proves that Montpellier is not the *only* place which produces monsters of the above species.

Since my last letter I have suffered by the recent bankruptcy of a man named Boulanger, Receiver-General of Finances for Brittany. Happily, I am

not heavily involved; but the wretched bankrupt himself has squandered a sum of 800,000 livres, all of which he employed in pandering to the luxury and vanity of his wife, who is the most outrageous flirt in all Paris.

She had a house, or rather a mansion, in the Rue Saint-Marc, Faubourg de Richelieu, and the household of a duchess; monsieur had his carriage, and madame had hers also; they kept open house, and one could go and feast on every delicacy without an invitation, just as at a provincial governor's. Dukes and princes were to be met there every day, for the financier's wife affected high life and grand people.

She regarded her husband merely as her banker or her man of business, and she treated him in the most haughty fashion, bestowing upon him very little of that amiability which she showered on the host of subordinate lovers who contributed to her splendour, and who have also been ruined by her.

Amongst the latter there was one whose wife would not stand that kind of thing. She was a sparkling Gascon lady, who could not endure this low-born little creature, whose only talent lay in understanding the art of daubing herself with powder and rouge very becomingly, and whose only wit consisted in knowing how to employ all the arms of a coquette's battery—she could not endure, I repeat, that a woman so immeasurably her inferior in all points should rob her of her husband's heart, or that *he* should be so reckless as to ruin his fortune and his family merely for the sake of sharing Madame

Boulanger's favours with the Duke of this, or the Prince of that!

All the same, she has been the rage with hosts of the *bourgeois* folks, who have all been made the dupes of her greed, and who are now repenting it at their leisure.

The husband of the lady whom I have just mentioned would give anything at the present moment to have followed his wife's advice. He is involved to the amount of 52,000 livres, and as he has besides that signed his name to securities, he is obliged to hide himself for fear of being seized; for if Boulanger is not to be found, he will have to pay down all that he has put his name to.

In truth, it is a bad business, and I pity with all my heart the above-mentioned lady, for she is a worthy woman, and has always been a good friend to me. She told me the other day that I was happy in having lost only my money; she herself had not come off so well, for her husband had wasted his substance in every way on this coquette; then, in a fit of vexation, her Gascon wit made her burst forth into a sort of epigram, which she immediately forwarded to Madame Boulanger. I send it to you also, because I think it funny; as poetry, it is worth nothing, but the idea is original. I give it you just as it stands:—

"Trop orgueilleuse Boulangère;
Vous donnez donc du nez, en terre!
Pour le coup, vous nous étonnez:
On est surpris de votre chute;
Car vous faisiez la cullebute,
Jadis ailleurs que sur le nez!"

Although the lines are halting, they soon spread all over Paris, and added to the mortification of the bankrupt's wife. All her courtly lovers have deserted her, and *he* is to be degraded to the rank of a sub-tax-inspector.

"Thus passeth away all the glory of this world!"

I paid a visit yesterday to the Gräfin von Fürstenberg,[1] at whose house I found the Marquis de Gravel, who, as you are aware, was dispatched to Cologne when the King desired that the Cardinal von Fürstenberg should be nominated Elector.

You are also aware that it was not for want of perseverance on the part of the Marquis that this matter was not carried out; the Court was extremely gratified at his skill in negotiation.

On his return the King gave him a very cordial welcome. His Majesty remarked on the same day to the Dauphine that Monsieur de Gravel spoke German and French equally well, and this procured him the honour of a conversation with that princess, who, although she was not very pleased with him at the bottom of her heart, did not fail to say that she considered him remarkably clever, which he certainly is, and also most courteous.

From Cologne he was sent to many other Ger-

[1] "Wife of William Egon, Graf von Fürstenberg, in Suabia, Germany, Canon of Cologne and Strassburg; afterwards created a Cardinal and Bishop of Strassburg, made a great noise through his contest for the electorship of Cologne; he was upheld with all his might by the King of France, but opposed by the Empire" (Collier, *Hist. Dict.*). This prelate probably had a dispensation to marry for political reasons.—(*Trans.*)

man Courts, and when the King directed him to go to Poland, all his friends thought he was on the road to a great fortune; but this was the very reef on which he was shipwrecked. As I have always been interested in everything concerning him, I begged the Gräfin von Fürstenberg, after he had left, to tell me his adventures, of which I had hitherto heard only a vague description.

The Gräfin was very willing to do so, as Monsieur de Gravel is extremely devoted to her family, and she knows all about him. So here is the story.

"Before his departure for Poland, Monsieur de Gravel was instructed to inquire into the conduct of the Marquis de Béthune, to whom the King had granted immense sums of money to further his (the King's) interests at that Court, but he was suspected of having acted only for his own.

"The Marquis was brother-in-law to the Queen, the consort of Sobieski, or at least he *passed* for such, for, according to common report, this princess was a daughter of the Marquis d'Arquien, the father of Madame de Béthune. But those who pretend to be better informed about the secret of her birth, declare that the late Queen of Poland[1] was her mother, and that Monsieur and Madame d'Arquien, to whom she

[1] Louise Marie, Princesse de Gonzague, widow of the king John Casimir V of Poland, previously married to his brother Ladislaw IV who died 1648. Her second husband took refuge in France; he received a generous pension from Louis XIV, and died at Nevers, 1672. The Queen died about 1667; she had by Casimir an only daughter, who died aged one year.—(*Trans.*)

had been confided as an embarrassing result of a love affair, had taken care to keep this a secret from the world, and had brought up the little girl as one of their own children.

"The affection which the Queen had for her seemed to authorise this report, for she raised her by degrees to the very throne she had herself occupied, and placed her in a position to occupy it after her.

"Her projects, as all now know, were carried out; but whether the Queen of Poland (whose husband has just died) is the child of the Queen who preceded her, or of the Marquis d'Arquien, it is very evident that she herself regards the latter as her father, and that taking this for granted, she has done all she can for the advantage of her family.

"Besides the Marquise de Béthune there is another daughter of the Marquis d'Arquien at the Polish Court, whom the Queen has married to the Grand Treasurer of the Kingdom, and it is on account of her that the poor Marquis de Gravel has fallen into disgrace. The Queen, although she is a Frenchwoman, did not espouse so warmly as she should have done the interests of France; and, forgetting that she would never have become Queen if France had not so firmly supported the claims of her husband Sobieski, she allowed herself to be guided less by sentiments of gratitude than by those of vanity, and jealous of the greatness of our monarch, whose equal she considered herself, she did all she could to overthrow his authority.

"The Marquis de Béthune was her devoted slave, and acted only according to her dictation, so you may judge if the interests of France were in good hands.

"The Marquis de Gravel, who had been commanded to inquire into these matters, soon penetrated this mystery, and in spite of all the kind things that the Queen said to him, discovered that she was anything but French at heart.

"The Marquis de Béthune had no wish to lose his handsome salary from France, and he was consequently furious that such a clear-sighted envoy had been sent there; he saw no way by which, with all his dissimulation, he could impose upon him, so he resolved to ruin him, and this is the way he set to work about it. Monsieur de Gravel had fallen in love with the wife of the Grand Treasurer, so-called sister of the Queen of Poland, and the lady responded to his affection. The affair was so far in progress that letters were already passing between them; and this love affair of Monsieur de Gravel was proceeding most successfully when the lady took it into her head to give him a rival in a man named Sardis, who was an Italian, and consequently capable of anything. In order to ruin Monsieur de Gravel, his enemies made use of this Italian, and instructed him to obtain possession from the wife of the Grand Treasurer of all the letters that Monsieur de Gravel had written to her. To carry this out, Sardis employed all his cunning, acted the part of a jealous,

offended lover, and finally gained what he required.

"The Treasurer's faithless wife delivered up to him all her first lover's letters, and he (Sardis), delighted with the success of his plot, hurried off to report himself to those who had employed him.

"All the letters were examined, but the difficulty was to find any crime that they could attribute to him who had written them. They turned them this way and that, but they could discover nothing.

"No affairs of State were discussed in them; they were only filled with tender sentimentality, and Sardis and his employers had come to the conclusion that there was nothing else to be discovered when the Italian lighted on a means of making use of them. There was no address on the outside of the fatal letters; the Grand Treasurer's wife was not named in them, and the Marquis de Gravel merely styled her therein 'My Princess.'

"The plan at last decided on was to say to the King (John Sobieski) that the Minister of France was in love with his daughter (who is now the Duchesse de Bavière), and then to place the letters in the desk of that Princess. They also got hold of one of her waiting-women, who told them that Monsieur de Gravel had often given her packets of papers to deliver to the Princess. These papers, which were in reality merely accompaniments to songs that Monsieur de Gravel had obtained from Paris, were carefully abstracted from the desk, and the letters I have mentioned substituted in their place. Thus

everything contributed to induce Sobieski to believe that Monsieur de Gravel had had the insolence to make love to his daughter, and the enraged Pole was contemplating a terrible vengeance, when the Treasurer's wife (who had never expected that her letters would bring about such an unpleasant result) declared openly that it was to herself that the Marquis de Gravel had written them.

"The opposite clique said that her testimony should not be taken, that it was merely a revival of affection for an old lover that had induced her to come forward, and that the place in which the letters had been discovered was sufficient proof that they were genuine.

"The Grand Treasurer's wife continued to maintain that she had given them up to Sardis, and I expect that the shameful use to which he had put them caused the lady great remorse, and showed her the difference between her two lovers. She therefore did all in her power to save the Marquis de Gravel from the danger which threatened him.

"He swore on his side that he had never given anything to the Princess except the songs for which she had asked him, and that they had been sent from Paris by his orders.

"The affair was entirely cleared up. Sobieski was convinced of the innocence of Monsieur de Gravel; but those who had sworn to ruin him did not stop at *that*.

"They aroused fresh suspicions in the King's mind, and he was induced to issue an order that the

Minister was to leave the Court in four and twenty hours, and the kingdom within a week. From this command there was no appeal.

"The unfortunate Minister was compelled to pack up at once. It was a serious matter, and he was warned to leave as privately as possible.

"He profited by this advice, and took his departure at night in a mail-cart by an unfrequented road, whilst his own coach proceeded in another direction.

"Results showed that the warning had not been given in vain, for, at one day's journey from Warsaw, the coach was attacked by four hundred men, who had been posted in ambush along the road, and who certainly were not there for any *good* intent; but he fortunately escaped the snare.

"His enemies were furious at having been balked in this way, but as they had got rid of him, they consoled themselves.

"However, the irregularity of the conduct of the Queen of Poland, and the want of respect that she showed for the King (Louis XIV), whose born subject she is, are the reasons why he (the King) will not assist the son (John Sobieski) at this juncture, in the same way as he formerly assisted the father; the Prince de Conti will therefore take every personal advantage of the protection of the *Roi Très-Chrétien.*"[1]

"I am doubtful, madame," I replied, "whether he *ought* to reckon on it with certainty; the Prince

[1] One of the titles of the Kings of France, given them by the Roman Catholic Church.—(*Trans.*)

is not immaculate, and the rank of a prince of the blood is not considered of much account in this reign; so I doubt whether the King will have much satisfaction in seeing him ascend a throne from whence he may possibly take vengeance for any ill-treatment he may have received."

"It is quite true," answered the Gräfin, "that princes of the blood are not very much in fashion just now; but the King knows that the Prince has a generous mind, and that he has, in consequence, nothing to fear from him; besides, in affording him his support to ascend the throne, he offers him reparation for any cause of complaint that he (the Prince), may have had against him; but what troubles me in this business is, that poor De Gravel, who has been the principal sufferer, has received no compensation; for although Love was 'the root of *his* evil,' it was only made a pretext of by others, and it was the zeal which he showed for his master's interests which set every one against him.

"Besides he may be certain that he is ruined; all his furniture and the major portion of his effects have been lost; he was obliged to launch out into heavy expenses to escape the snares that were set for him; I expect that it will be a long time before he can make good the mischief which it has wrought in his affairs; the Court really ought to give him some compensation; but between you and me this is an ungrateful country."

She then told me that this intrigue was a secret, and that the King had no wish to bear any ill part

in it himself; so she begged me not to talk about it anywhere, and I will ask the same favour of *you*.

As no one knew the rights of the story, no one has got at the truth of it; some are saying that Monsieur de Gravel rashly made love to the Queen of Poland, and has been punished for *that;* I must confess that I also had thought the same thing. I was astonished, however, that a Princess who had responded to the love of Cardinal de Bonzi should have become so reserved in her latter years, for there is not much to choose between one ambassador and another, and besides, the Marquis de Gravel is a very handsome man; thus people were conjecturing about it after their own fashion, as they invariably do concerning things which they know very little about.

I will send you some news about the Prince de Conti as soon as I hear any; meanwhile I ask for your good wishes for him, which you will share in common with all who know him. Never was there a prince more beloved, or any prince with more royal feelings.

Some time ago one of his servants robbed him of two thousand crowns. The theft was detected, and the thief would certainly have been punished if he had had a less generous master; but the Prince de Conti spoke to him privately, and said:

"My friend, as you have served me faithfully in the past, I think it can only have been urgent need that could have made you forget yourself so far.

"It is very sad for me, that, with all my kindness

to my servants, I am unable to shield them from such temptations; however, I will *give* you the two thousand crowns that you have stolen from me, because I suppose that you must be in want, or you would never have gone to such lengths. Now—take the money and go; for, after the scandal that has taken place, it will be unpleasant for you to remain in my house."

You must confess, madame, that there was something very noble in this behaviour of the Prince, and that he certainly merits our interest.

Present my compliments, if you please, to the Bishop of Nîmes.[1] I have read some verses he wrote on *Quietism*, and feel very grateful to the secretary who purloined them, and gave them to the public. It is too bad of the Bishop of Nîmes to try and hide such charming productions from us.—I remain, etc.

[1] Esprit Fléchier, Bishop of Nîmes.—(*Trans.*)

LETTER XV

FROM MADAME DU NOYER TO HER FRIEND

Departure from Montpellier—Visit to Pézénas—The Island of Maguelonne—Pierre of Provence—The Princesse de Conti—The Baron de la Crasse—Visits to Béziers—Old proverb about Béziers—Charming voices—Delicious springs—Monsieur Colbert—The Grand Canal de Languedoc, or Du Midi—Monsieur Riquet—President Riquet—The Comte de Broglie—Description of the Canal—Monsieur de Vauban—Visit to Carcassonne—The Holy Handkerchief—The Square—The jealous husband and the four gates—Monsieur Du Noyer and his friends—An impromptu supper and ball—Visit to Castelnaudary—Monsieur de Montmorenci—His battle—His defeat—Cardinal de Richelieu—The Marquise de Saint Joiri—Imprisonment of Monsieur de Montmorenci—The Ladies' plot—A midnight warning—Execution of Monsieur de Montmorenci—Madame de Grammond—The Bishop of Saint Papoul—Arrival of Madame Du Noyer at Toulouse—Monsieur Samson and his wife—Madame de Pontchartrain—Grand fête at the Hôtel de Ville—The Duc de Noailles—The Capitoules of Toulouse—The Cordon Bleu—The antiquities of Toulouse—The Palace of the Comtes de Toulouse—The Church of the Cordeliers—The Charnel House—The beautiful Paula—Mummies—Saint Sernin—The Albigenses—The Sacred Thorn—Our Black Lady—A miracle—Processions—Buried alive—Madame Lanta—Monsieur Riquet—Monsieur de la Valette-Cornusson—An ill-matched pair—Divorce—Death of Monsieur de la Valette-Cornusson—Monsieur de Lanta—The Bishop of Saint Papoul—Madame de Beauvac—Mademoiselle Riquet—Monsieur de Louvois—The Marquis d'Antin—Matrimonial difficulties—Madame de Frauts—A woman's im-

pertinence—The Prince of Denmark—Visit to Montauban—Description of the town—Amusements of Toulouse.

TOULOUSE.

MADAME,—I was no longer at Montpellier when your letter arrived there, and only received it after it had been forwarded here, whither my wandering destiny has led me.

As you expressed a wish that I should describe to you the places through which I have passed, I must tell you that from Montpellier I went to stay at Pézénas,[1] after having driven along the shore of the Mediterranean, or at least of a lagoon, on the left, which opens into it, and also passing on the left the island of the famous Maguelonne,[2] mistress of Pierre of Provence.

You must excuse me, please, from relating their history to you; if you want to know anything more about them, you will be sure to find all about it in the library of any of your lackeys.

Pézénas is, to my thinking, one of the prettiest little places in the world; its suburbs are charming. The town is surrounded by meadows which are watered by rivulets, and there are also enchanting gardens; I find my stay here most agreeable. The Prince de Conti is the Seigneur of this

[1] Pézénas, the ancient *Picinæ*, a prosperous town of the department of Hérault, 25 miles S.W. of Montpellier.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Maguelonne, a ruined town in lower Languedoc, formerly a Bishop's see, which was transferred to Montpellier. It was built in a small gulf of the Mediterranean, called "The Volces," or "Volques-Pond." It was demolished in 736 by Charles Martel, rebuilt 1060 by Arnaldus, Bishop of Nice, and became the seat of the Comtes de Melgueil-et-Substantion.—(*Trans.*)

place, and is already looked upon as "His Polish Majesty."

I would have given anything to have stayed longer in this little town, which I only knew of through a comedy by the Baron de la Crasse, and which I found so very agreeable; but as my husband had received orders from Court which compelled him to hurry on so as to arrive at Toulouse as speedily as possible, we continued our journey *viâ* Béziers.[1] This town does not come up to the ideal that I had formed of it.

I had heard of a certain proverb which says—"That if God came to live on earth, He would live at Béziers," but I do not know what they found it upon, for *I* should think He would be far better off at Pézénas!

The only pleasure to be got out of Béziers is, that nearly everybody there has a charming voice, which is the result of the excellent water supplied to the town, for it possesses some of the finest springs in the world.

I left my coach at Béziers, and sailed down the canal[2] which connects the two seas, and which is one of the wonders of this reign. It is true that the King had less share in its construction than Monsieur

[1] Béziers, an important and prosperous town built on a steep hill, at the foot of which flows the river Orb; it is in the department of Hérault, Languedoc, 38 miles from Montpellier. It was known anciently by Pliny, Pomponius Mela, and Ptolemy, as Bitterra, Baitira, Beterroe, Beteris, Biterrensis, and Bederensis Civitas.—(*Trans.*)

[2] The Canal of Languedoc, or Du Midi, commences at the Garonne, near Toulouse, and terminates in the Étang de Thau, in the Mediterranean. Its length is 153 miles, and it is 66 feet wide. It was

Colbert,[1] and that the whole glory of the design is due to Monsieur Riquet,[2] father of President Riquet, who has just married a daughter of the Comte de Broglie,[3] who is also niece to Monsieur de Baville,[4] the Intendant of this province. The canal is certainly a magnificent work, and Monsieur de Vauban says that *he* would be satisfied if he had merely done *that!*

The most curious thing which I remarked on it was a mountain which has been tunnelled, and through which the canal flows, and consequently the barges pass through it also.

It takes nearly an hour to go through the tunnel, but I should have liked it to last a whole day. The air that one breathes in it is very cool. I had some persons from Béziers with me, who had naturally

constructed by Riquet, from Andréossi's designs, and is capable of floating barges of a hundred tons; a local ballad celebrates the fame of Riquet, as follows:—

Ce que toujours le monde admire, d'âge en âge,
Ce que le Languedoc contemple avec amour,
Et qui fait le bien-être à la ville, au village;
C'est le canal de Riquetou.
Oui, grâces à Riquet, la cité de Toulouse,
D'aucune autre n'est jalouse.

The canal has sixty-two locks, a hundred bridges, and fifty-five aqueducts. The tunnel of Mal-pas, of which Madame Du Noyer speaks, is 567 feet in length. The canal is no longer a government monopoly for traffic, but has belonged to a company for ninety-nine years.—(*Trans.*)

[1] Colbert, Marquis de Seignelai.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Pierre Paul de Riquet, de Bonrepos, engineer of the great canal of Languedoc, born 1604, died 1st Oct. 1680.—(*Trans.*)

[3] For Monsieur de Baville, *see* letter xi.—(*Trans.*)

[4] Sébastien Le Prestre, Seigneur de Vauban, military engineer and Marshal of France, born 1633, died at Dunkirk, of congestion of the lungs, 30th March 1707.—(*Trans.*)

splendid voices, and it was delightful to hear them trying their voices in the tunnel. Another thing which astonished me was that in a certain place the canal had been made to pass over a bridge, so that I was utterly amazed when it was pointed out to me that we had the river with another bridge below us! There were many other parts that connoisseurs like Monsieur de Vauban would have considered admirable, but to which *I* did not pay any attention.

As the country is not level, it was found necessary to make locks, and this was the only unpleasant part of my journey, which was otherwise most agreeable.

There are excellent places to stop at for the night. The first is an inn which was built expressly for the purpose, but on the second day we took lodging at Carcassonne, where there is nothing curious except a "Holy Handkerchief,"[1] which they assured me was the real one; but I felt no desire to go and look at it, because I had already been told the same thing in so many other places.

[1] "Veronica, or Berenice, a Jewess, put a handkerchief upon our Saviour's face (when He carried His cross to Mount Calvary), to wipe away the sweat and blood; some say the Veronica is properly the portrait of our Saviour's face, which remained imprinted upon this handkerchief, so called from the two words, *Vera-Icon, i.e.* True Likeness; and by corruption, Veronica.

"It is believed by some of the Church of Rome that this handkerchief lay in three folds, and that our Saviour's face was taken by all three of them, one of which is kept at Rome, another in Spain, and a third at Jerusalem. Pope Boniface VIII had this relic carried from the Church of the Holy Ghost to that of St. Peter. There are now several copies taken from it."—(Jeremy Collier, *Biog. Dict.*)

In driving through the town, which appeared to me a very pretty one, I was made to observe how, from the Square which is the centre of it, all the four gates can be seen; and they told me, in reference to that, how the man who had built Carcassonne was a jealous one, and that he had designed the city in this fashion so that his wife could not go out by any of the gates without his seeing her—for it is on this Square that the gentlemen of Carcassonne hold the assizes.

My husband met there some members of his own profession whom he had known formerly, and who, in virtue of their old friendship, came to call on me without ceremony at the inn where I was lodging. My husband asked me to be polite to them, as they were all men of rank. I therefore invited some of them to supper, and was quite surprised at the end of the meal to see some violinists enter my room, and without any preparation, begin a ball which these gentlemen had got up for me, and to which some most charming people came.

They are as gay here at Carcassonne as they are at Béziers, and dance equally well.

The ball lasted far into the night, and the following morning we continued our journey on to Castelnaudary.[1]

I was shown the spot where Monsieur de Montmorenci[2] lost the battle which he had fought

[1] Castelnaudary, the ancient *Sostomagus*, built on a declivity near the Canal du Midi, in the department of Aude, and 22 miles W.N.W. of Carcassonne.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Admiral Henri, Duc de Montmorenci et Damville, son of Henri, Duc de Montmorenci, born 1595; splendid in dress, courtly, hand-

against the King's troops, or rather against Cardinal de Richelieu,[1] and I could not help thinking how cruel *they* were who shut the gates of the city against the unfortunate Prince, when he was fleeing before those enemies into whose hands he had the misfortune to fall, and who, as you know, gave him no quarter. I saw at Toulouse the place where he was beheaded, and the stains of his blood may still be seen on the wall. The Parliament condemned him, but it was with tears in their eyes.

I have met some people who were there at the time, and who told me many details I should never otherwise have learned. The Marquise de Saint Joiri told me some time ago, that Monsieur de Montmorenci was brought to her house before being conducted to Toulouse, and that he was closely guarded in her château, where the Princesse de Condé[2] also occupied a suite of apartments.

This Princess having done all in her power to

some, and brave; he was defeated by Maréchal Schomberg near Castelnaudary, and beheaded at Toulouse, 30th October 1632.—(*Trans.*)

[1] Armand Jean du Plessis, Cardinal and Prime Minister to Louis XIII, and son of François Armand du Plessis, Maréchal, and Duc de Richelieu. Born at Paris 1585, died 4th December 1642.—(*Trans.*)

[2] The Princesse Charlotte Marguerite de Montmorenci, daughter of Henri, Duc de Montmorenci, and sister of Admiral Henri de Montmorenci. In 1620 she married the minister, Henri, Prince de Condé, and became the mother, in 1621, of Louis, Prince de Condé, surnamed the Great, and of Armand, Prince de Conti, born 1629. The King, Henri IV, pursued her with such disgraceful importunity, that her husband, at her own instance, to save her reputation and honour, took her to Brussels, where she lived till the death of her royal and aged lover on the 14th May 1610, by the hands of the assassin Ravaillac. She then returned to France, and died there, December 2, 1650, aged fifty-seven. She was a woman of great accomplishments, virtue, and strength of character, and of marvellous beauty.—(*Trans.*)

obtain her brother's pardon, and perceiving that the Cardinal had sworn his death, resolved to have the minister assassinated in order to save him.

She confided the plot to the Marquise de Saint Joiri, and entreated her to help her to carry it out.

The Marquise was still very young, and had only been married a very short time, nevertheless she kept the secret, and promised to assist the Princesse.

The plot was that the Princesse should secrete a dagger under her skirt, and that when the Cardinal (who was in love with her) should come to pay her a visit she was to lead him into the garden, whilst Madame de Saint Joiri, with a few other trustworthy women, were to station themselves at the gate, each armed with a dagger, and at the first sign from the Princesse "they were to rush in suddenly and spring upon his eminence, who would no doubt have suffered the fate of Orpheus,[1] if his good angel had not warded off the blow.

I do not know whether he had a presentiment of what was coming, but when the Princesse had led him into a summer-house, that past-master of craft practised all his arts so well that he swore with many an oath to spare her brother's life, and the

[1] The Thracian women, offended with Orpheus on account of his constancy to his wife Eurydice, and his coldness to their amorous blandishments, attacked him at a Bacchanalian ceremony, and slew him, and after they had torn his body to pieces, cast his head into the River Hebrus; but his lips still continued to sigh and wail, Eurydice! Eurydice! till the head was carried down the stream into the Egean Sea.—(*Trans.*)

unsuspecting Princesse trusted him, and gave up the idea of assassinating him. Consequently the signal was not given. The ladies sheathed their daggers, and the opportunity of saving Monsieur de Montmorenci was lost, without possibility of recurrence; for on the following day the Cardinal had him transferred to Toulouse, where he was cast into the dungeon of the Hôtel de Ville.[1]

Madame de Saint Joiri also related to me how, when he was imprisoned at her château, she was requested by the Princesse to go and tell him something important. The thing was difficult to do; but little Madame de Saint Joiri managed to accomplish it. She rose in the night, and slightly attired, and barefooted, went to his room, and softly laid herself down on his bed, for fear that if he woke up with a start, he might betray to his guards what was going on. As soon as she perceived that he was awake, she whispered in his ear that which she had been charged to tell him, and then returned without being observed, although she had to pass and re-pass the guards, who were sleeping on mattresses on the floor of the hall.

Madame de Saint Joiri, who is now very aged, told me a host of other anecdotes of a like kind. I take much more pleasure in conversing with persons of that time, on those memorable events, than in reading what authors have written about them, for the former speak from personal knowledge.

[1] The Hôtel de Ville of Toulouse is situated on the great square in the centre of the city, called "La Place du Capitole."—(*Trans.*)

A priest who accompanied the confessor of Monsieur de Montmorenci when the Prince was led to execution, related to me the other day that the latter had his pulse felt as he was leaving his room, so that it might be observed that he was not in the least agitated, and this calmness he maintained until he reached the scaffold, "But, madame," he added, "when he saw it his *face* utterly changed, and although he did not show the least symptom of *fear*, his confessor told him that 'he no longer recognised him as Monsieur de Montmorenci.'" It is said that the scaffold was such a low one that his blood spurted up against the wall.

Whilst he was thus being executed privately in the courtyard of the Hôtel de Ville, a scaffold, hung with black velvet, had, by the orders of the Cardinal, been erected in the "Place de Saint George," to keep the populace "amused" all day; for it was feared, and not without reason, that an effort would be made to rescue him. Madame de Grammond,[1] mother of the Bishop of Saint Papoul,[2] and wife of one of the judges of Monsieur de Montmorenci, knew where the sanguinary deed was being enacted, and went to the gate of the Hôtel de Ville, with a hearse to remove the body of the unfortunate

[1] Madame de Grammond, wife of Gabriel Barthélemi, Seigneur de Grammond, the President of the Parliament of Toulouse. He wrote an admirable history of Louis XIII, and an equally valuable and curious account in Latin of the Huguenot wars of Louis XIII. He was an accomplished lawyer, a good man, and an upright judge. He died in 1654, greatly respected.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Saint Papoul, in the department of Aude, four miles E. of Castelnaudary.—(*Trans.*)

Prince, who had entreated her in his will to take this task upon herself. She waited a long time in the street, but as soon as the execution was over all the gates were thrown open, the hearse drove in, and the lady, weeping bitterly, had the corpse placed in it, and carried to the Church of the Cordeliers. There the body remained in their keeping until his widow claimed it, and had it interred in a superb mausoleum in the Church of the Convent at Moulins,[1] where she ended her days.

The Bishop of Saint Papoul,[2] when conversing with me on this subject, said that, some time before Monsieur de Montmorenci had openly declared war, the latter had said to Monsieur de Grammond, father of the Bishop, "Monsieur, if I were accused of some crime before your tribunal, would you feel any hesitation in condemning me to death?"

"No, sir," replied Monsieur de Grammond; "for if you were guilty, I am sure Your Highness would condemn yourself!"

"You are quite right," he answered; "you must never act against justice. But I hope," he added, "that such a thing will never happen to me." And in fact, far from his harbouring any grudge against Monsieur de Grammond, who had been compelled by the law to condemn him, he entrusted his remains, as I have just told you, to the wife of that magistrate, and made her a present of the splendid

[1] Moulins on the Allier, is the chief town of the department of Allier, and was called anciently *Molina*, or *Molinum*.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Monsieur de Grammond.—(*Trans.*)

diamond which is still in their family, and which I saw at the house of Madame de Lanta. These are private circumstances, which certainly you would never have found in any history, but which I have learned through original sources.

But all these details have apparently led me into a long digression, and I have been relating to you all I saw and heard at Toulouse,[1] before telling you that I had arrived there! It is very excusable; but I must, if only for the sake of chronology, relate my journey bit by bit. Well then, I journeyed from Castelnaudary to Toulouse, as before, by the canal.

On my arrival at that splendid city, to which the name of "The Holy" has been given, I found waiting to receive me that little fellow Samson, son of the Registrar of Witnesses, with whom you also are acquainted. After some talk, I learned from him that he had just been married to a niece of Madame de Pontchartrain, and had obtained with her, as a dowry, the Intendantship of Montauban.[2] I went to call upon her, and she was most polite to me, and invited me to a fête which the Capitouls[3] gave in her

[1] Toulouse, the ancient *Tolosa*, situated on the Garonne and the Canal du Midi, in the department of Haute-Garonne, 130 miles S.E. from Bordeaux.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Montauban, the ancient *Mons Albanus*, on the River Tarn, department of Tarn-et-Garonne, 110 miles S.E. of Bordeaux, was one of the centres of Huguenot history and persecution; it has a Protestant seminary and pastorate.—(*Trans.*)

[3] "Capitouls," says Collier, "are those who, at Toulouse, have care of the business and government of the town;" this was synonymous, in the seventeenth century, with the term *jurat* in the north of France, *échevin* in Picardy, and *consul* in the south-west of France. The title

honour at the Hôtel de Ville. The Capitouls of Toulouse are the same as Sheriffs elsewhere. The term Capitoul is derived, it is said, from the Capitol of Rome; the title confers the rank of nobility, and the Duc de Noailles, when he was obliged to present his certificates before becoming a Knight of the Order of the Holy Ghost (or *Cordon-Bleu*),[1] thought it quite sufficient to produce the certificate of the Capitoulship of one of his ancestors.

Be this as it may, the fête given by these gentlemen to Madame Samson was extremely magnificent.

After the collation there was a ball in the Hall of the Consistory, which is the place where the Judges sit.

Afterwards we were shown over all the finest portions of the building, which was in olden times

of Capitoul conferred the rank of nobility for ever on the holders of it; the Chief Capitoul was always called Mayor or Provost.—(*Trans.*)

[1] "*Cordon Bleu*, the Order of the Holy Ghost, a Knighthood in France, instituted by Henri III, who celebrated its first festival the 31st December 1578 and 1st January 1579. The number of knights was limited to a hundred, without including those of the clergy, viz. four cardinals and four bishops, together with the great almoner and the officers of the Order, viz. a chancellor, treasurer, register, and king-at-arms, and the knights were ordered to wear a Cross of Malta, having a dove in the centre of it; to which King Henri IV, in 1598, added a collar made of trophies, from whence proceed flames, intermixed with crowned H's. The King allowed every one of the knights a pension of a thousand crowns. It is said that the occasion of Henri III instituting this Order of the Holy Ghost, was because on the day of Pentecost, or Whitsunday, he had received two crowns, viz. that of Poland and that of France; and others say that the same was also his birthday. Some pretend that this Order was invented by Louis de Tarante, King of Jerusalem and Sicily, etc., in 1382, but that being fallen by the troubles of the civil wars of those kingdoms, it was renewed by Henri III, upon reading the original constitution of that Order, which had fallen into the hands of the Venetians, and was presented to him by them."—(Collier, *Biog. Dict.*)

the Palace of the Comtes de Toulouse,[1] and where there are still some very fine pictures of that period. Madame Samson soon after took her departure for Montauban; we parted in the most friendly manner, and she made me promise to go and visit her at her Intendancy house; which I did not fail to do; but before that I went to see the Church of the Cordeliers: I saw there the charnel-house[2] of which I had so often heard, where bodies last, perfectly preserved, for centuries. That of "the beautiful Paula" still retains traces of beauty.

I asked the good fathers by what means they preserved the bodies from decomposition.

They informed me that they first buried the corpses in a particular kind of earth, which ate away the epidermis, then they exposed them to the outer air till they were sufficiently desiccated, after which they set them up in the charnel-house. Whilst one of the monks was speaking to me, I saw some others coming down from the clock tower, with dead

[1] "The Hôtel de Ville, or Capitole, in the Place du Capitole, is a pile 380 feet by 128, built 1660-70, with a front like the river front of Somerset House, and a portico of eight red Ionic pillars. It includes at present the Grand Theatre; an old court in which Henri de Montmorenci was executed, 1632, containing a black marble statue of Henry IV; a gallery called Salle des Illustres, in which are a hundred and sixty busts of natives and others; and the Salle de Clémence, so called from a statue (brought from the Daurade Church) of the famous Clémence Isaure, a lady of the fourteenth century, and a professor of the *Gai savoir* (gay science), in whose honour prizes of gold and silver flowers are given at the May meeting of the *Jeux Floraux* Society."—(Bradshaw, *Handbook to France.*)

[2] The ground on which the church is built possesses the same mysterious antiseptic quality as that of St. Michan in Dublin, and the vaults of the Cordeliers' Church are from this fact one of the curiosities of the city.—(*Trans.*)

bodies across their shoulders, which the open air had deprived of all stench, so I was able to judge thereby, that the worthy Cordelier had spoken truly. From the Cordeliers I went to the Church of Saint Sernin;[1] it is there that "the Holy Bodies,"[2] are interred and it is from that circumstance that Toulouse derives its appellation of "the Holy." I was shown an enormous number of Saints' bodies, as well as those of Apostles and Martyrs. I do not know what they say to that at Rome, for it seems to me that they boast *there* of having these *very* bodies; but perhaps they *have* duplicates, although I do not understand how that can be possible; but one thing is certain, they are preserved in magnificent shrines. After having seen them at Saint Sernin, I again saw them pass in review at a procession which took place some time afterwards, to celebrate "the Day of Deliverance"[3] of the city, viz. the day

[1] "St. Sernin, or Saturnin, rebuilt 1090, on the site of a Roman temple, in the Romanesque style of the twelfth century (as seen in the choir and transepts), and the Gothic of the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. The façade is unfinished. The south portal, or Porte Miégeville, is in the Renaissance style. The Porte des Comtes is ornamented with the *Seven Capital Sins*, and has a niche where some of the early counts were buried. The tower consists of six decreasing stories, with a short spire. Within are several great pillars; five or six *circular* side chapels, one of which, the Sacristy, is called after the *Sept Dormants* or Seven Christians, condemned by Trajan; a copy of the splendid shrine of the saint; and an ancient restored crypt, in which Abbé Lacordaire preached 1852. Also a stall in the Abbot's throne, with a carving of 'Calvin le Porc, Pt.' (or Calvin the pig, preaching)." —(Bradshaw, *Handbook to France.*)

[2] The seven Christian martyrs mentioned in previous note.—(*Trans.*)

[3] On the 12th September 1213, the Albigenses were driven out of Toulouse by Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, in a battle against Raymond VI, Count of Toulouse, and his kinsman Pedro of Aragon.—(*Trans.*)

on which the Albigenses were driven out, and all the Protestants exterminated.

I had always considered that the latter uttered a libel against us when they accused us of adoring images and relics, but I am now convinced that the accusation is true; for the moment that "the Sacred Thorn"[1] passed, every one went down on their knees, just because it is averred that this "Sacred Thorn" was taken from the crown of our Lord.

I have also seen all the people prostrate themselves before an image of the virgin, called "Our Black Lady." I was informed (in order to account for this adoration) that this image was a miraculous one, and it was also related to me how one day a fire took place in one of the suburbs of Toulouse, and that as all the holy water in the place failed to extinguish it, the Holy Sacrament was sent for; but as that also failed, they were compelled to have recourse to the Black Virgin, and the conflagration ceased the instant she appeared. I was assured that she had been seen to shed tears! This was on a par with a hundred similar stories which were related to me.

The Benedictine Fathers[2] who possess this

[1] "Baldwin II (last Latin Emperor of Constantinople) sold to Louis IX (of France) the crown of thorns which had been placed on the head of the Saviour, for the sum of ten thousand marks of silver, the relic being transferred from Venice to Paris, where the king, barefoot and in his shirt, carried it in triumph through the streets in 1261."—(Townsend, *Manual of Dates.*)

[2] The Benedictine Monks were "founded as an Order by St. Benedict, or Bennet, who introduced monachism into western Europe, and erected his first monastery on the site of a temple of Apollo on Monte Cassino, about 50 miles from Subiaco, in Italy, A.D. 529."—(Townsend, *Manual of Dates.*)

treasure, do not allow it to be seen every day, but draw enormous contributions from persons who have recourse to the image.

On the days on which these splendid processions take place at Toulouse, prodigious multitudes of strangers are attracted from all the neighbouring towns, some by devotion, others by curiosity.

One of these pilgrims, on arriving there, fell ill and died at the inn where he had taken up his lodging.

The landlord gave notice of it to the priest of his parish, which was that called "*La Dalbade*,"[1] and the corpse was "laid out" in that church, until the time ordered for its interment.

The following morning, as a pious woman was saying her prayers in the same chapel, she heard something stirring in the coffin, and ran terrified to summon the priests. They treated her at first as a visionary; but as she persisted in declaring that she *had* heard something, the coffin was opened, and the supposed corpse was found to be alive.

He made signs by which they understood that he desired to be bled. This they did; but all the assistance they gave him proved futile, and he expired shortly after.

It is scarcely a fortnight since I heard this, and I

[1] Madame Du Noyer seems to be mistaken here in the name of the Church; I can find no mention of such a name in Toulousian chronicles, and she probably means the ancient Church and Parish of Notre Dame de la Dorade (or our Lady of the Gold Fish); the present church was rebuilt in 1764, on the site of the old one of her day; the old convent which belonged to it is now a tobacco factory. —(*Trans.*)

still shudder when I think of it; for I imagine there are many persons who have been buried alive, and I confess that I should dread a similar fate. But let us leave these melancholy reflections.

The other day at Madame de Lanta's house there was a large party. Madame de Lanta is a daughter of the Monsieur Riquet who constructed the canal, and sister of the one who is President here.

She had two hundred thousand livres down on her marriage with Monsieur de la Valette-Cornusson, Seneschal of Toulouse, who belongs to one of the best families in the province. She lived with him three years; but at last, wearying of him, she brought an accusation against him[1] . . . and employed all the formalities necessary to prove the justice of that accusation. At last, after a protracted lawsuit, the marriage was annulled, and she was free to marry again whom she pleased.

She selected Monsieur de Lanta, who, according to what people say, had carried on an intrigue with her before her lawsuit with Monsieur de Cornusson.

Poor Monsieur de Cornusson was so heart-broken at his wife's desertion of him that he became a monk, and died a short time afterwards.

Monsieur de Lanta is a nephew of the Bishop of Saint Papoul,[2] and it is said that when this prelate communicated the marriage of his nephew to the Archbishop of Toulouse, the latter replied: "Mon-

[1] . . . Unfit for translation.—(*Trans.*)
[2] Monsieur de Grammond.—(*Trans.*)

sieur de Lanta is very bold to take another man's wife, as well as the money of the province."

In saying "the money of the province" he intended to convey that the dowry of Madame de Lanta came out of money of which her father had robbed the canal.

Be this as it may, the marriage has turned out a very happy one; Madame de Lanta has lovely children, and, although her conduct was rather scandalous, she has not, in spite of that, lost caste here.

Her house here resembles that of Madame de Beauvac at Avignon, in that they gamble very heavily, and that she daily receives the very best society.

Mademoiselle Riquet, her sister, lives with her, and Monsieur de Montespan was so deeply in love with the young lady that he concocted a letter to the Pope to request his dispensation to marry her.

He alleged the best reasons possible for it, and I fancy that the Pope would have granted his request if he had ever received the letter, which is certainly one of the cleverest I have ever read; but Monsieur de Louvois,[1] to whom Monsieur de Montespan had shown his rough copy of it, assured him that if he forwarded it to the Pope, or pushed the King's

[1] François Michel Le Tellier, Marquis de Louvois, Prime Minister to Louis XIV, and son of the Chancellor and Secretary of State, Michel Le Tellier; born at Paris 1639, created Minister of War at the age of twenty-three, Superintendent of Arts and Public Buildings in 1683 (on the death of Colbert), died 16th July 1691.—(*Trans.*)

patience too far, he would be a ruined man, and would also damage the interests of his son, the Marquis d'Antin.

Poor Monsieur de Montespan lost courage for the first time, and did not send off his letter; but he kept it by him nevertheless, and did me the honour to show it to me.

Monsieur de Montespan is a most courtly seigneur. Lately, whilst he was playing cards, there was a very considerable sum at stake, and Madame de Frauts, who was present, said to him that "she hoped that *he* would win it."

He actually did so, and at the same time made that lady a present of a watch worth fifty louis, to reward her for her wish. I think that *I* should have hesitated in accepting it, but Madame de Frauts had not the same scruples.

"Monsieur knows," she exclaimed, "that I am a most unpunctual woman, and he wants to make me punctual, so I must not refuse the means of becoming so."

Although Monsieur de Montespan never has the slightest hesitation in discussing his wife's conduct, he cannot endure being joked about it, and, good-tempered and polite as he is, he has no mercy on ladies who make merry over the matter.

Some time ago, whilst he was playing at *Lansquenet*, he lost his first card, which was a king of hearts. At this he swore a little, upon which the wife of one of the presidents said, by way of being witty, "Ah, monsieur, it is not the king of hearts

who has worked you most harm." Monsieur de Montespan, furious at his loss and at the ill-timed joke of the president's wife, replied: "My wife may be worth a *louis*, but *you* are not worth thirty *sous!*"

Some time after that, he joined a party of friends, and went with them to a masked ball given in honour of the above-mentioned president's wife, and there, in the presence of every one, gave her a slash with a riding-whip; which done, he left the ball unrecognised.

Every one suspected that it was he who had given the blow, but, as it could not be proved, and also, as the lady had drawn the insult upon herself, it was hushed up. This example made other ladies more circumspect.

We have here now a son of the King of Denmark,[1] that is to say, he is the younger brother of the Crown Prince[2] whom we saw in Paris. He has some distinguished persons with him, who are extremely agreeable and speak French very well.

One of them, named Monsieur Pleich, whose father is one of the plenipotentiaries at Ryswick, told me yesterday evening that the party of the Elector of Saxony is daily gaining the ascendant, and that, judging from all appearances, the Prince de Conti will not be very successful in his mission.

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[1] Christiern V of Denmark, eldest son of King Frederick III; he died in 1699, having begun his reign in 1670.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Afterwards Frederic IV, King of Denmark, born 1671, reigned from 1699 to 1730.—(*Trans.*)

He also told me that the Prince had already sailed through the Sound, and that the King of Denmark had entertained him on his journey.

They say that the imperial of the Prince de Conti's post-chaise got broken, and a number of snuff-boxes that the Prince was taking to Poland were found strewn on the road. Upon which a young man in our party exclaimed, "Cadédis![1] He is going to lead them by the nose." The voice, and the manner in which he said that, nearly made me die of laughing!

People are quite correct in what they say about the vivacity of the Gascons.[2] I have never met any people so full of such quick repartee; I should never finish if I were to begin telling you all I hear about them every day.

They are accused of being crafty and false-hearted, but I have not yet discovered that *myself*, so can only speak of their wit.

The ladies[3] here are much the same as elsewhere, that is to say, a little coquettish; they have not such frank manners as those at Montpellier, but it is said

[1] Cadédis! An expletive of the period, possibly a corruption of the Gascon "Cap de Diou!"—(*Trans.*)

[2] The Abbé le Voisvenon says of them: "Ce peuple, le plus spirituel de la terre, a un tort immense à mes yeux; ils ne se lavent pas assez les mains."

[3] "Les Toulousaines sont en général petites, et, quoiqu'elles aient les cheveux noirs, la blancheur de leur teint ne peut être surpassée. Dans leurs traits, le piquant s'unit à la grâce; la fraîcheur de leur visage, l'incarnat de leurs lèvres attestent la pureté du sang; des dents petites et perlées, des yeux superbes, presque toujours fendus en amande, et voilés. À ces qualités extérieures, elles joignent une âme aimante et un caractère d'une pétulance singulière; elles sont franches, communicatives et gaies."—(Abbé le Voisvenon.)

that they do not keep up the same reserve in *tête-à-têtes*, so it comes to the same thing.

There are some very fine promenades here, a public drive where one sees a great many carriages, and a beautiful garden called "The Frascati," where people saunter about as they do at the Tuileries[1] in Paris. As soon as I had seen this place a little I went to pay my promised visit to Madame Samson at Montauban; she fêted me splendidly, and also invited a large party of ladies and gentlemen to meet me.

Monsieur de Grillon, who commands the troops in this province, came to sup with us, and we passed the rest of the night at cards. As I was not entirely mistress of my own time, I was obliged to bid farewell to my hosts on the following day, and return here.

Before leaving Montauban I was shown the public drive, which is very pretty, and I was also taken to the "Bishop's Garden," which is the favourite promenade there.

I saw the bishop, having already made his acquaintance at Montpellier; his name is Nemond, and he is closely related to the son-in-law of Madame de Miramion.

He told me that his flock was almost entirely composed of Huguenots, who give him a great deal

[1] The Tuileries gardens were laid out, and the palace constructed by Catherine di Medici in 1564, on the site of the old tile-making fields from whence they derived their name; they were completed some years later by Louis XIII; the palace was destroyed by the Communists in May 1871.—(*Trans.*)

of trouble to manage, especially just now that they have taken into their heads that the re-establishment of their religion will be one of the articles of the future treaty,[1] and that the Prince of Orange[2] will only take a part in it on that condition.

I fancy that these good people are flattering themselves too much, and that the Prince of Orange is far too busy with his own affairs and the safety of the three crowns he has placed on his head.

And now, madame, I have told you about everything I saw at Montauban; you could not have a more exact account than I have given you of my doings. When I have seen a little more of Toulouse, I will tell you all about that too.

The opera and comedy-theatre are now open here; there will be card-parties at a number of the best houses, also several ceremonies of taking the veil, musical masses, services, and other religious rites, which quite hold their own here with parties of pleasure; in fact, there is something to amuse every one, each according to his or her special tastes.

Adieu, madame; I think I should go on writing to you till to-morrow, if my paper did not force me to stop.—I remain, etc.

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[1] The Peace of Ryswick.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Afterwards William III, King of England; he was Prince of Orange, son of William II, Stadthouder of Holland and Zeeland, and his wife Princess Mary, daughter of Charles I of England; born at the Hague, July 1650; married Princess Mary, daughter of James II, King of England, 4th November 1677; died at Kensington, 8th March 1702; the Queen died, 28th December 1694. They left no issue.—(*Trans.*)

LETTER XVI

REPLY FROM HER FRIEND

The flirting Abbés—The Prince de Conti—The disgrace of the Abbé de Polignac—The Duc de Bourgogne and his marriage—The Princesse de Savoye—Madame de Maintenon "rules the roast"—Monsieur de Molé-Champlâtreux—The Marquise de Lancé exiled—The Duc de la Ferté—How the Marquise de Lancé married her own mother—Her strange history—Her gambling and supper-parties—Tax-collectors—Popular hatred of them—The tax-collector's wife—How she boasted, and how she was punished for it.

PARIS.

MADAME,—Please do not grumble at being obliged to travel.

A "perambulating life" is, to my thinking, the most delightful thing in the world, especially when one travels with as much amusement as *you* seem to have had on your journey hitherto.

You are seeing some of the most charming scenery in the world, and your pleasures are varied every day, whilst here we have the same opera going on for six months, and we are reduced to flirting with our abbés, who have it all their own way now in the field of flirtation, ever since the war carried away our officers.

If the Peace does not set things in order, there

will be no enduring this any longer, and we shall be obliged to fly from Paris.

Your Danish friend,[1] as far as I can judge, is very well informed concerning matters here.

The Prince de Conti is returning from Poland, and gives up all his claims in that quarter. The Elector of Saxony has gained the day, and the King has disgraced the Abbé de Polignac,[2] who is accused of not having done all that he ought to have done in this business; perhaps he went *beyond* his office. One does not know what private orders he may have received from the Court, and it is very possible that his disgrace is a mere *ruse*.

Great preparations are being made for the marriage of the Duc de Bourgogne.

The little Princesse de Savoye is not pretty, but there is always hope for so young a creature, and she may grow more beautiful. She is very witty,

[1] Monsieur Pleich.—(*Trans.*)

[2] "Melchior de Polignac, a statesman and man of letters, born in 1661, at Puy-en-Velay, in Languedoc . . . second son of the Vicomte de Polignac, . . . at an early age (he was) sent to the College of Clermont. . . . Madame de Sévigné said of him, 'of all the men I know he appears to me one of the most agreeable. He knows everything, he talks of everything, he has all the softness, the vivacity, the complaisance that can be desired in social intercourse.' In 1692. . . appointed Ambassador to Poland . . . A large party was prepared to elect the Prince de Conti. . . . The plan failed, however, and Polignac found some difficulty in getting back to his own country in 1698, after having been pillaged of his equipages and effects by the Dantzicers." (A'Beckett, *Biog. Dict.*) Was made a Cardinal, 1713; exiled, 1718; recalled 1721. Ambassador from France to Rome for eight years, from 1724, during which time he was elected Archbishop of Auch, and commander of the Order of the Cordon Bleu, or Holy Ghost. He was a man of kindly, courteous manners, upright life and great learning in antiquarian matters, and of no mean talents as a poet and a prose writer. He died 10th November 1741.—(*Trans.*)

and the King is passionately fond of her; in fact, every one hails her arrival with delight, because it will establish peace.

It is to be hoped that her marriage will restore some liveliness to the Court, and that the peace will make it durable. Meanwhile "La Dévote,"[1] who "rules the roast," and Monsieur de Molé-Champlâtreux insisted the other day on the Marquise de Lancé being exiled, on the pretext that her conduct was irregular; but the *real* reason is, that gambling went on at that lady's house, as it does also at the house of Monsieur de Champlâtreux, whose neighbour she is, and a great many people preferred going to her rather than to the pious magistrate's. The friends of Madame de Lancé complained loudly at this, but their remonstrances took no effect, and by a *lettre-de-cachet* she was ordered to depart within twenty-four hours.

As I was not acquainted with that lady, I asked the Duc de la Ferté, who is a great friend of hers, all about her, and the following is what he told me:—Madame de Lancé, as a girl, was beautiful, very witty, and very poor; but desirous of acquiring rank without taking unto herself a lord and master, she requested her mother to dress herself in man's clothes. In this garb, and under

[1] "La Dévote," a nickname given by the Court to the Marquise de Maintenon. Matthieu de Molé, Chevalier and Sieur de Champlâtreux, was one of Madame de Maintenon's principal supporters. He was "Premier Président" of the Parliament of Paris, received the Seals 3d April 1651, and resigned them ten days after, but was requested by the King to resume them in September 1652.—(*Trans.*)

the name of the "Marquis de Lancé," this complaisant mother courted her daughter and married her very shortly after.

The marriage was openly celebrated in the presence of a large number of people, after which the pseudo-Marquis de Lancé took his departure, and the mother, resuming her original character, went to live with the newly-made Marquise de Lancé, who by this pretended marriage found herself freed from all the trammels which bind an unmarried girl. She began by taking a splendid mansion and having a household like a marquise, and gave card parties, so as to have money to pay for both. After that she announced the death of her phantom spouse, and put on very deep mourning; since when she has, thanks to gambling, managed to live here in grand style.

She always had staying with her two or three young ladies, to whom she gave board and lodging, but otherwise never troubled herself at all about them or their morals. They contributed to the amusement of her assemblies, at which were gathered together, with mutual delight, all the wittiest people of the Court and the city.

They met at her house at five o'clock in the afternoon, and every one on arrival put down a pistole towards the game. They played till midnight, at which hour a magnificent supper was served.

As the party was rather an assemblage of clever people than of gamblers, the wittiest sayings were

bandied about at table, but all without any riotousness or scandal.

The "Marquise" had found out the secret of making herself esteemed, and as much respect was shown to her as if she had been a queen.

Besides, she never received any but distinguished persons, who were only too pleased that their pistole provided them with such a splendid entertainment and such agreeable conversation. Apart from this also Madame de Lancé herself was delightfully witty, and as those whom she invited were equally so, they all took a mutual pleasure in each other's society.

The company separated usually about four o'clock in the morning. The "Marquise" went to bed at five; at noon she partook of some soup, and from that hour fasted till supper time.

The same manner of life was carried on day after day, and would have been going on still if Monsieur de Champlâtreux (jealous, because she enticed away daily some of his own players) had not persuaded the King that her establishment was an infamous one. The King believed it, and the poor woman, who by her shrewdness had managed to make a very good income, is now ruined.

All those who used to frequent her house feel that they are cut adrift, and it is most amusing to hear them inveighing against the above-mentioned religious persons.

I thought the history of this pseudo-marquise so extraordinary that I felt sure that you would like

to hear it. I can vouch for its truth, so you may believe it. Meanwhile we are daily expecting the news of the conclusion of the Treaty. It is thought that the conditions will not be very advantageous to France; but what does that matter to us? Indeed it signifies very little whether he (Louis XIV) extends or retrenches his dominions, so long as we can eat our bread in peace at home without fear of being overwhelmed every day by fresh taxes, against which the nation is already beginning to rebel.

I was shown the other day some rather amusing lines on the subject of the tax that has just been levied on armorial bearings; they were rather obscene, but that is the poet's fault, not mine, so I enclose them to you without feeling guilty.[1]

. . . . . .

I would swear that these lines were written by a Gascon. Perhaps you may come across the author of them at Toulouse. The style of the verses savours unmistakeably of the neighbourhood of the Garonne.[2] But I do not mean to imply by this that people are not given to versifying here also, on the banks of the Seine. So, as we are on the subject of the rascalities of the tax-collectors, here are some lines written against the wife of an Inspector of Customs. She was accused

[1] The lines are what Madame Du Noyer's friend describes them to be, and consequently unfit for translation in these pages; it is sufficient to say that the tax is therein pronounced as hateful as the promoters of it.—(*Trans.*)

[2] The river on which the city of Toulouse is situated.—(*Trans.*)

of flirting and of "plastering" her cheeks with enamel.

This lady was boasting the other day, before some persons less wealthy than herself, of her town-house and her country-house; and as she looked round scornfully on the company while she described her splendid rooms, and a staircase the painting of which had cost ten thousand crowns, a lady, who is an old friend of yours, and was present at the time, wrote the following lines and slipped them into the pocket of the boastful wife of the Customs Inspector—

Il ne vous est pas difficile,
De bien bâtir aux champs, de même qu'à la ville;
Tout cède au gré de vos désirs.
Vous vivez de nos déplaisirs,
La fortune vous idolâtre.
Hélas! qui peut bâtir plus aisément que vous?
Le bois croît sur le chef de monsieur votre époux,
Et vous ne manquez pas de plâtre.[1]

The wife of the Inspector of Customs kept very quiet about these lines; but she who had indited them took good care to distribute copies of them to all the ladies of her acquaintance, and that is how *I* came to know about them. I cannot at present write any more to you. This is already the tenth letter that I have written to-day; it is past

[1] 'Tis no hard task for *you*, I trow,
In country and in town to build:
For at your beck the world doth bow;
With what we lose your purse is filled,
While fortune on your steps doth wait.
Then who could build with better speed?
The wood grows on your goodman's pate,
And plaster, faith, *you'*ll never need!—(L. B.)

midnight, and I am so sleepy that I can hold up no longer.

So adieu! Write to me as often as you can. Above all things, go on loving me; and believe that I, on my side, will ever do the same.—I remain, etc.

LETTER XVII

FROM MADAME DU NOYER TO HER FRIEND

The Marquise de Lancé—Another tour—Bad driving—A tumble into the river—Quillan in the Pyrenees—Bears and nobility—The Marquis de Léren—The Marquis de Chalabre—The Marquis de Sainte Colombe—The King of Denmark—Wild beasts and tame beasts—The truth about bears—Pretty Madame Descouloubre—Unreasonable jealousy—Mad or jealous?—The cuckoo, and what came of it—Coach *versus* rain—A serious debate—A midnight adventure—Perpignan—The Duc de Vendôme—Roussillon—Don Francisco de Benavides—A petition—Love and liberty—A Spanish love story—The Señora Margareta—"The course of true love never did run smooth"—"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife"—Constancy and virtue—A lovesick Abbé—A suspicious husband—Ladies should take care of their keys!—An awkward discovery—Flirtations in church—Tit for tat—Carried off—"Absence makes the heart grow fond"—A false alarm—"Post-offices are sacred places"—The romances of De Calprenède and De Scudéri—The depravity of the century—Departure from Perpignan—Mont-Louis—Monsieur d'Urban and Madame d'Urban—Monsieur de Melliant, Bishop of Alet—Monsieur Pavillon—"Only fit for goats"—Good living—The Prince of Denmark—The Academy of Wits—Bouts-rimés—Poem and prayer.

TOULOUSE.

MADAME,—The history of the pseudo "Marquise" de Lancé is so extraordinary that if I had heard it from any one but yourself I should certainly never have believed it.

It is said that "there is no longer anything new under the sun;" but I am sure that the above story is new, and that no one has ever before heard of a daughter marrying her mother.

The place I am in now does not produce any adventures like *that*, nor does the one from which I have just come—for you must know that I have not been at Toulouse all this time.

Since I last wrote to you I have made a most delightful tour, although it was in a part of the country so uncivilised that my coach was the first that had ever been seen in those parts! and what is more, I nearly lost my life by travelling in it, for the roads are very narrow, and my coachman was kind enough to pitch us into the river.

We were rescued by a miracle, and arrived in a woebegone state at Quillan,[1] a little town in the Pyrenees. I had been made so nervous about this neighbourhood, which I had been told was only inhabited by bears, that I wore nothing but my dressing-gown and night-hood, not thinking it worth while to do my hair or dress myself just to look at wild beasts; but I was greatly astonished when I found out that these mountains were quite "a nursery of nobility."

The Marquis de Léren, the Marquis de Chalabre, and the Marquis de Sainte Colombe came to visit us at Quillan, and gave us a quantity of wild boar, roe-buck, and other wild game.

[1] Quillan, a small town on the road from Perpignan to Foix, in the department of Aude, and 13 miles S. of Limoux.—(*Trans.*)

I brought some of them back with me here, and made a present of them to the King of Denmark; I also gave him, amongst other things, a little live young wild boar, with which he was very much delighted.

It is quite untrue what naturalists tell us about bears, for they are born just like any other animals, and do *not* come into the world a shapeless mass. I have seen it for myself, so you can believe me.

Besides the gentlemen whom I saw at Quillan, I also made the acquaintance of a very pretty woman, named Madame Descouloubre. She is a daughter of the Marquis de Chalabre, and married to a husband so jealous that he will not let her speak to any one, no matter who it may be.

He did, however, make an exception in my favour, for he allowed her to come and visit me and dine with me. The poor little woman thought that the time she had thus spent was the happiest in her life, and wished "that it could have lasted for ever."

I must confess that I parted from her with regret; I felt such intense pity for her. You can judge what her husband's jealousy is by what I am now going to relate to you. One day that they were going together to call on one of their neighbours (she riding on a pillion behind him), he threw her to the ground because he had heard the note of a cuckoo, and then rushed about, pistol in hand to kill the bird, for the bad omen it announced.

Besides the risk I myself had run in falling into the river, my poor coach was exposed to another one.

I have already told you how they had never before seen one at Quillan.

I arrived there just at a time when rain was wanted, and when processions had been made every day to induce it to come. But so futile had these processions proved, that the inhabitants of the town, who are a superstitious and cunning people, as you will see, imagined that it was my coach which prevented their wishes from being granted.

Thereupon the Town-Council was assembled, and after having discussed the matter with solemn deliberation, condemned the "rolling machine" to be cast into the river. As you may imagine, madame, this sentence was not made public, and they naturally found some difficulty in carrying it out; but at last it was decided that it should be done by stealth during the time that every one was asleep. The consequence was that, one night, when I was in my "beauty sleep," I was awakened by the noise made in dragging out my poor coach from the place in which it was put up. I was very much surprised to hear the rumble at such an unheard-of hour, so I awoke my servants, who discovered that the coach was being dragged out by about thirty of these idiots, but the latter took to flight directly they saw my people coming.

A moment later and my poor coach would have been done for; so ever since that, I have always had some one to guard it.

As you may imagine, none of the nobility of the place had been summoned to this ridiculous Council.

All the gentlemen had a laugh over it with me, and it was from them that I heard of the absurd meeting. They also told me a host of other anecdotes illustrating the characteristics of these people.

From Quillan I went to Perpignan,[1] my husband having received orders to meet the Duc de Vendôme[2] there.

That town is the capital of Roussillon. Every one there speaks French, and I met some very agreeable people.

The first acquaintance I made was a Catalonian gentleman, a captain of dragoons, who had just been taken prisoner of war. He was a remarkably handsome man, with a splendid figure and a fine leg, an oval face, an aquiline nose, and the most beautiful large black eyes. His complexion was very dark, and his mouth rather large, but adorned with teeth whiter than ivory; and added to all the above, a most gentle nature and infinite courtesy and good breeding,—in fact every merit that goes to make up a perfect gentleman. His name was Don Francisco de Benavides.

He came to see me immediately on my arrival; and when we had become acquainted, he entreated

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[1] Perpignan, the ancient *Perpinianum*, or *Perperianum*, in the department of the Pyrenées-Orientales, on the river Têt, 34 miles S. of Narbonne.—(*Trans.*)

[2] The famous general, Louis Joseph, Duc de Vendôme, was the son of Louis, Duc de Vendôme, by Laura Mancini, daughter of the Comte and Comtesse Mancini, and niece of Cardinal Mazarin. The Duc de Vendôme was great-grandson of Henri IV, by his favourite mistress, Gabrielle d'Estrées. He was born 1654; married 1710, a daughter of the Prince de Condé; died without issue 11th June 1712, of indigestion.—(*Trans.*)

me to intercede for him with the Duc de Vendôme and procure him his liberation. I begged my husband to perform this good office for him, and I willingly assisted him myself as soon as he had confided to me the reasons he had for desiring his freedom. He told me that for five years he had been in love with a Catalonian lady (whose surname he would never reveal to me); indeed, he was very reluctant at first to tell me the story, and the reticence he showed about it, indicated how much he respected the lady. However, the pleasure he experienced in talking about her, and the need he had of my assistance, induced him insensibly to tell me all that I was so eager to hear.

He informed me that the duties of his calling obliged him once to go to a town in Catalonia, where the husband of the above-mentioned lady was commandant. He paid her every attention that politeness and good breeding demanded, and afterwards, perceiving that the commandant's wife had great influence over her husband's mind, begged her to influence him in his favour. The lady was kind-hearted, so he did not find it difficult to obtain her interest for himself, and whilst relating to her all his misfortunes he discovered the way to touch her heart, and to steal into it by the gate of pity, which is not, to my thinking, at all a bad entrance to it! The lady, whom he has never called anything but "the Señora Margareta" to me, interested herself actively in his favour, without questioning herself as to what were the motives which induced her to do so.

Don Francisco, on his side, felt that at first he had merely acted from sheer policy, then from gratitude; but he discovered afterwards that his heart was more deeply involved than he had suspected, thanks to the sweet and fascinating manners of the Señora.

She was a woman of about twenty-six years of age, but appeared much younger; her figure was above medium height and rather inclined to *embonpoint*, although the latter is not an ordinary failing with Catalonian women; but this defect was, nevertheless, quite compensated for by her healthy appearance, which made her most attractive.

She had a beautifully modelled bust, fine arms and hands; but her complexion was dark, like that of most of her countrywomen.

The *contour* of her face was lovely, and her features regular; her eyes and mouth were in especial most beautiful; she had white teeth; and with another complexion, and a slimmer figure, would have been considered a beautiful woman.

An intellectual mind and delicacy of feeling made everything she did charming.

She was inclined to melancholy, but the melancholy was gentle and tempered by reason, and, far from making her peevish, only shed a halo of softness over her manner. She was a woman thoroughly occupied with the cares of her family, was always a great "stay-at-home," and *apparently* felt no interest in anything else; but it was afterwards proved that this was not the case.

When she appeared at Court, she made a very

good impression by her charming manner, and thereby contributed to her husband's advancement. She had married him by a mere chance, not from love or any advantage to herself.

The marriage turned out well. The Señora was not a flirt, and she had an affectionate heart, and devoted herself entirely to her husband; whilst her husband, on his side, took such a pride in his wife's fidelity to him, that she thought herself quite compensated thereby for the lack of fortune.

They had charming children, who were the objects of their love and care, and thus the first seven years of their married life passed like the first seven years of Nero's reign.

It seemed as if the innocence of primeval times had been revived in this household, where reigned perfect trust and love; but as there is no enduring happiness, so even that of this couple came to an end. The husband wearied of this peaceful tranquil life; ambition filled his soul, and made him restless. Every day he formed some fresh plan, or made trips to Court; whilst his wife, who cared for no pleasures apart from him, passed her days in the most pitiable dulness.

As she held a high rank in her own province, there were many who presented themselves with the view of consoling her for her husband's frequent absences. But the Señora warded off all their attentions.

Her husband, on his side, pretended that it was the affection that he had for her which compelled

him to seek his advancement. He begged her to consent to it, and not to give herself up to melancholy in the way she did.

The Señora, in despair at not being able to keep him by her side, at last made up her mind to bear his neglect; and as it became impossible for her to continue to live like a recluse, she gradually took to going into society for the sake of forgetting her troubles.

Her husband approved of her conduct, and always told her at parting to amuse herself as much as she pleased.

Women have far more liberty in Catalonia than they have in any other of the provinces of Spain, and the Señora Margareta had a free and easy manner which was very charming to those who were attached to her. A young Abbé residing near her seemed the most attentive of all. He belonged to one of the best families in the province, was very handsome, and being a near neighbour of the Señora, had frequent opportunities of seeing her. His whole thoughts were given up to contributing to her amusement, and making himself agreeable to her.

As he knew that her affections were wholly devoted to her children, he caressed them and played with them, and, in short, was so kind and attentive that the Señora could not help feeling grateful to him.

People began to think that *he* was the favoured one, and there were some kind persons who informed the husband on his return that the Abbé

was in love with his wife. He took fright at this, and inquired into the matter, but as he discovered nothing that he could condemn in his wife's conduct, he was jealous without having anything to complain of. He regretted his absences, which had not proved fruitful of success; and as he was obliged to go to Court once more, resolved to take the Señora with him, she being delighted to have him restored to her affection. They set off therefore together to Madrid, where she made a whole host of friends.

Shortly afterwards, her husband was obliged to return to his own province, so he left her at Court to advance his prospects.

The Señora "worked the oracle" to such good effect that in six months' time she procured for him a fine appointment, sparing neither importunity nor her own wealth to that end.

Delighted with her success, she departed in triumph to seek her husband.

As she approached their country-seat, she looked out everywhere for him, quite expecting that he would come to meet her, but he was not to be seen anywhere, not even when she arrived at their house, although she had made a point of writing to tell him on what day she would return home.

The Señora's feelings were hurt at this coldness; she did not know what to think of such conduct. Every one came to congratulate her on her arrival, and on the successful result of her mission. The poor Abbé was the first to arrive, and the husband was the last to do so. He was joked about it, but

the Señora did not say a word as to what *she* thought.

After this the Abbé became more assiduous than ever in his attentions, and the husband grew jealous again, and betrayed to the Abbé that he was so; whereupon the latter, in his anger at this, and at the Señora's coldness, revealed to her one day that her husband had carried on a criminal connection during her absence with a woman far inferior to herself in every way. The Abbé hoped that the Señora's feelings of vengeance would be aroused by this conduct; so, as he wished very much to be the instrument of it, he furnished her with witnesses and every necessary proof, and the facts were well attested.

The husband, however, denied everything with the most blasphemous asseverations; but he was at last driven to confess all, having been actually caught *flagrante delicto.* This affair, which was nothing more than all wives might have expected, caused the Señora deep grief, for she had always pinned her faith to her husband's fidelity, as he had always discoursed on that subject like a saint, and had made out that he was quite different to other men.

The time also which he had chosen for his infidelity only made matters worse, as it was just at the moment when she was sacrificing for his benefit all the wealth which her parents had bequeathed to her, and doing everything to advance his interests. She was desirous of leaving instantly a man who had been so ungrateful to her, but he showed such deep remorse, and said so much to appease her, that she

consented to accompany him once more when he departed to take over the new appointment she had procured for him; but she only agreed to this on condition that her trust in him should never again be betrayed, and that she should be allowed to amuse herself to her full bent like the other married women of her country, so that she might forget a little the misery that he had caused her.

The husband agreed to everything, as he felt that he had been in the wrong.

The poor Abbé, however, got no reward for *his* pains, and the Señora departed with her husband. Don Francisco met her at this juncture in the frame of mind of which I have spoken above, and profited by it. They had not yet given utterance to the feelings with which each had inspired the other before the husband too became aware of the state of affairs; but the Señora would not have known this, if one of their lady-friends had not warned her.

"Don Francisco scarcely dares to look at you," she said one day when they were dining together.

"Why?" asked the Señora hurriedly.

"Because," answered the other lady, "he is afraid that your husband might be jealous."

This surprised the Señora, who began to note things more closely, and in fact observed that her husband was in a bad temper. Every one soon noticed that he had "a bee in his bonnet." Don Francisco spoke of it to the Señora, and took the opportunity of making a declaration of his love in the most subtle and delicate manner.

The Señora was not sorry to have found a means of taking vengeance on her husband by making him jealous, and, in short, she found that revenge was much sweeter than she had imagined.

Her husband, fearing that she might push her resentment too far, gave Don Francisco a hint to keep away, in order to remove him from his wife's company.

The shrewd lady-friend who had discovered the state of matters between these three persons, warned the Señora of what was going on: whereupon they went to mass together, and Don Francisco joined them there, for all affairs of gallantry in Spain are carried on in the churches. He informed them that he had been ordered to leave the place.

This news astonished the Señora Margareta greatly.

"Will you really go away, Señor?" she asked Don Francisco.

"I must, Señora," answered he, "as your husband requests me to do so; it would be very unkind if I did *not*, after all his goodness to me, and you know what tact I have to exercise with him."

"But," continued the Señora, "suppose some one entreated you to stay, would you do so?"

"It depends who it is that entreats me, Señora," he replied.

"I know some one who would," she answered, "but for the fear of running the risk of a refusal."

"And *I* know some one whom I could not

refuse," replied Don Francisco, "even if I had to risk my life as a proof of my obedience."

"Remain then!" exclaimed the Señora; "it shall not cost you so dear as *that.* I will take upon myself to make your reasons for so doing acceptable to my husband."

So saying she left the church in her litter. Thereupon Don Francisco, who was suffering from a quartan ague, made the most of his illness, and declared that he was not in a fit condition to travel.

The Señora backed him up in this, and her husband, who had great dependence on her, dared not say anything against him, or blame her for looking after the invalid. She had broth made for him; and as the commandant kept open house, Don Francisco dined there every day whenever the fever was not upon him, and whenever there was a parade he always pretended to be ill, so that he might stay behind with the Señora, and thus profit by her husband's absence.

Don Francisco felt as if he could not live a moment apart from the Señora, who, on her side, always felt bored if she went anywhere where he was not present. Never were there two people whose affection for each other was so perfect. Whenever Don Francisco dilated on his own to the Señora, she felt as if he were reading her own thoughts, and to him it seemed as if she divined his own. Never had there been a more powerful attraction with more rapid results.

As the Señora disliked concealment, she did not

allow Don Francisco to remain ignorant of the hold which he had gained upon her affections, but at the same time she made him aware that this must be the limit to his desires. However much he longed to add to his conquest, he could find no opportunity of doing so, and he felt that he might lose all were he to persist in trying to gain too much.

He was obliged therefore to submit to what she ordained, as the Señora's affection was within the bounds of virtue.

She promised him her entire affection, and exacted from him that he would never demand more of her.

The conditions of this treaty were so well observed, that (as Don Francisco swore to me) when he found himself on one occasion quite alone with the lady, he did not dare to attempt the slightest liberty with her.

After having remained for some time in the same place where she was living, he was compelled to leave; their parting was a tender one, and the Señora promised to love him eternally; so, a little consoled by this assurance, he took his departure.

A short time after this, he received orders to proceed to Germany on service.

His grief was greatly increased thereby, and feeling that he could not make up his mind to go so far from his Señora without seeing her once more, he went to the place where she lived, under the pretext of asking the commandant's advice on some matter regarding his own appointment.

Don Francisco found the Señora as tender and

faithful as ever, but her virtue was impregnable. She was so delicate-minded, that she would have been very much offended if he had wished to find her less chaste.

She declared that if one were really in love, one would sacrifice all one's own desires, even suppress them, for fear of displeasing the beloved object. Don Francisco tried to persuade her, that he was thinking less of his own pleasure, than of assuring himself of her affection by some palpable mark of tenderness.

The discussion lasted a long time, for the Señora was not at all disposed to grant him any of the aforesaid "marks of tenderness," nor did she wish him to depart unhappy, so hitting upon a better plan, they resolved to carry on a correspondence.

The Señora gave Don Francisco permission to write to her whatever his heart dictated, and promised him that she would do the same; he was obliged to be satisfied with that, and thus, during three years' separation, they continued to write the most charming letters to each other.

I have read some of them; they are full of the sweetest sentiments expressed with the greatest refinement, and one can see that the deep affection therein made manifest is, throughout, virtuous.

After three years' absence, they had the delight of seeing each other again, but still on the same footing, although the commandant's absence at Court left them entire liberty. During this time they were alone in a country-house, but Don Francisco vowed to me that although he had passed evening

after evening with the Señora, sitting in the shade, after the heat of the day, he had never once ventured upon any proposal disrespectful to her, as he knew the futility of it; besides, he had no wish to infringe upon or break through the conditions of their agreement, and she had so accustomed him to her rules, that he was more gratified when she allowed him to kiss her hand, than if he had obtained the greatest favours from some other woman.

He was sure of being loved, and he felt such intense joy in the love of so virtuous a woman that his own esteem and affection were redoubled. He told me that one day, when they were at Mass together, at the Church of the Jacobins,[1] a sudden gush of tenderness overcame him, and as the Holy Sacrament was being elevated, he exclaimed to her; "Señora, I swear to you, before the God whom I believe to be therein present, that I shall never love but you, and that I shall love you all my life!"

I daresay you will consider it most extraordinary to have held such a conversation in a church, but as I have already told you, the tenderest scenes in Spain take place on the holiest of spots.

Don Francisco was again obliged to absent him-

[1] "Jacobins, or Dominicans, were monks of a religious order, founded by St. Dominick, approved by Innocent III in the Lateran Council 1215, and confirmed by Honorius III, under St. Austin's rules, and the founder's particular constitutions. In France they were named Jacobins because their first convent in Paris was in the Rue St. Jacques. John Michaelis's reformation of that order was confirmed by Paul V in 1608, and received in France. . . . St. Dominick de Guzman was a Spanish gentleman. He preached against the Albigenses with great zeal, and died at Bologna, in Italy, 1221. Pope Gregory IX canonised him, 1235."—(Collier, *Hist. Dict.*)

self from the Señora. The interchange of letters began anew, and was carried on for five years without the husband ever having the remotest suspicion of it.

He was well aware that his wife liked Don Francisco, but he was quite unconscious that she was carrying on a correspondence with him, so cleverly had she arranged it all.

However, an accident happened by which everything might have been discovered.

The Señora was taken so ill one night, that she thought she had not another moment to live. In this state, her first fear was the thought that, after her death, Don Francisco's letters would be discovered, whereupon she conquered her feebleness, and begging her husband to leave her alone for a moment, got out of bed and burnt them all; then she laid herself down again to await the approach of death; but her time had not yet come.

She became quite well again, and wrote and received many more letters; but at last one day, in spite of all her precautions, she forgot her keys when she was going to Mass, and one of her women-servants, desirous of ingratiating herself with the husband, went and told him that the Señora had left her writing-desk unlocked.

The husband, who was an inquisitive man, rummaged all through it, and found a letter, the style of which awoke all his former jealousy.

He flew into such a rage with his wife, that she candidly confessed that at first she had only regarded

Don Francisco as an instrument of revenge for herself, but that, as time went on, she could not help loving him; nevertheless, her sense of honour prevented her from going any farther than *that*, and she was not the sort of woman to carry her revenge to such extreme lengths as to behave as *he* himself had done.

The husband felt the justice of her reproaches, and concealing his mortification, resolved to watch his wife and intercept any letters she might write to Don Francisco so that he might obtain proofs of her suspected infidelity.

The result was that one day, when he knew that she had written to Don Francisco, he took upon himself to go to the post-office, and got the letter back, in spite of the risk he ran in doing such a bold deed, for post-offices are "sacred places."

However, he discovered in this letter nothing that he had expected; on the contrary, the Señora after having informed Don Francisco as to what had passed, told him that "as she had nothing to blame herself for, she was not afraid; that the testimony of her own conscience was her consolation, and permitted her to await, without fear, whatever destiny had in store for her. She entreated him not to be alarmed on her account, and not to be surprised if he received no more letters from her, as she could no longer write to him without risk."

She ended by giving him a thousand tender assurances of her undying constancy. The husband was surprised at the letter, and found in it much that he could admire, as well as much that wounded him.

The thought of his wife's attachment made him furious; but her virtue charmed him, and showed him the nobility of a heart which he now reproached himself for never having tried to win.

At last, after he had well considered what he ought to do at such a difficult juncture, he resolved to adopt no violent measures, but to take his wife once more to Court.

He ordered his coach to be got ready at once, and started, but as the coachman fell ill on the very first day, he made one of his footmen drive them, and the latter ended by upsetting them over a bridge into a ditch. This all happened just because he did not want Don Francisco to get wind of their departure. The unfortunate lover, not receiving any reply, was in great grief, and did not know what to think of her silence; he therefore determined to run all risks, and set off in a post-chaise to the commandant's house. He was told that he had left; he had inquired first for the Señora, and was quite startled to learn that she too had gone away.

He seemed so utterly dumbfounded at this, that a footman took pity on him, and, by way of consolation, told him that they had gone to Madrid.

Don Francisco hastened after them, but without succeeding in overtaking them, for the commandant had taken such a circuitous route that the unfortunate lover (whose duty called him back to Barcelona[1]) was obliged to return thither, whilst the

[1] Barcelona, the ancient *Barcina*, capital of the present province of the same name, formerly capital of Catalonia, is supposed to have

commandant's only thought was to hurry his wife away.

As soon as they had travelled some days, he tried to make his peace with her. He told her how he had intercepted the letter which she had written to Don Francisco, and that what he had read therein had quite calmed all his fears, and removed his suspicions; also that virtue such as hers merited high honour, as there was nothing more difficult than to resist one's inclinations; and that he admired her wisdom, but thought that it would be more prudent to remove her from temptation. He would never leave her again, but would endeavour, by his tenderness for her, to make her forget all the grief he had formerly caused her, and for which the pain his own jealousy had given to himself would be a sufficient expiation.

The Señora had a good heart, and was very much relieved to find him in such an amiable mood; so they arrived at Court quite re-united. Don Francisco no longer dared to write to her, but at last, not knowing what to do, he bethought himself of writing direct to the commandant regarding some military matters, and enclosed his address, hoping that the Señora might perchance have a glance at the letter, and profit by it.

The thing turned out as he imagined; the Señora learned through it his address, and wrote him a

derived its name from Hamilcar Barca, its Carthaginian founder in B.C. 200. This town is situated on the Mediterranean, 186 miles N.E. of Valencia.—(*Trans.*)

letter which was forwarded here, in which she described her journey to him, and the reason of it. It is this which makes him desire his leave so earnestly, and also why *I* am interesting myself in his behalf. I hope he will soon get his exchange, and I shall make a point of helping him to obtain it.

There is something so fine in a woman loving faithfully and chastely, that I cannot help admiring the Señora Margareta.

After that, let our dandies, and other such like fickle-hearted creatures, say what they like about its being impossible to love without crime, or that such a thing has never existed except in the imagination of a De Calprenède[1] or a De Scudéri, and that "men are not such fools as to be caught by chaff." The above is an example which gives the lie to such assertions, and in spite of the depravity of our time, there *are* still women who know how to restrain themselves within the bounds prescribed by virtue, and men sufficiently honourable to appreciate

[1] "Gautier de Costes, Seigneur de Calprenède, born 1612, in the diocese of Cahors, came to Paris in 1632, and entered into a regiment of guards. His talents for agreeable story-telling introduced him at Court; he obtained a pension from the Queen, and was at length made gentleman-in-ordinary of the King's bedchamber. As a writer, he first made himself known by some pieces for the theatre, and his *Mithridates* appeared as early as 1635. His reputation, however, was chiefly founded on his romances, of which the principal are his *Cassandra*, *Cleopatra*, and *Pharamond;* each of them consisting of ten or twelve large vols. in 8vo. He seems to have maintained a respectable character in life, and was employed in some foreign negotiations. He died in consequence of a blow on the head from his horse in August (or as some say October) 1663."—(A'Beckett, *Univ. Biog.*)

the value of a good heart, and to be content with possessing that alone; but unfortunately such examples are rare in Paris, and *pure* affection is no longer to be found there.

After I had obtained an assurance from Monsieur de Vendôme, that Don Francisco should get his exchange on the first opportunity, and as soon as my husband had finished the business which had summoned him to Perpignan, we took our departure, and returned here.

We passed through Mont-Louis,[1] where we were sumptuously entertained by Monsieur d'Urban, who is an uncle of Madame d'Urban of Avignon, and Governor of that place (Mont-Louis).

Monsieur de Melliant, Bishop of Alet,[2] and successor of the famous Monsieur Pavillon,[3] whose piety and fortitude were so much admired, also received us magnificently, in his episcopal palace. At last, having journeyed by roads made and roads unmade, and climbed mountains by paths only fit for goats,

[1] Montlouis, a commune of France, department of Eastern Pyrenees, 40 miles W.S.W. of Perpignan. It is situated on a very steep rock overhanging the river Têt, and crowned by a citadel.—(*Trans.*)

[2] Alet, the obsolete form of spelling for Alais (anciently called *Alesia*), a town in the department of Gard, on the river Gardon, in the Cévennes mountains, 25 miles N.W. of Nîmes.—(*Trans.*)

[3] "Nicolas Pavillon, born 1597, a French ecclesiastic, made by Richelieu Bishop of Alais. His conduct in his diocese was misrepresented at Court, and the King sent commissioners to examine the complaints preferred against him. Though acquitted, a fresh offence, and his unwillingness to submit to the royal mandate, incensed the monarch, and he was deposed from his see, and died in exile December 8, 1677. His works are a ritual for his diocese, and synodal statutes and ordinances."—(L'Emprière, *Biography.*)

we arrived here, after many "ups-and-downs," bringing back with us a host of wild animals, and a great quantity of game. I only wish I were near enough to send you some of the red and white partridges; I had never seen them before anywhere, except in the Pyrenees; I also saw some pheasants. In fact, the province whence we have come is very suitable for good living, but not to drive one's coach through! I was obliged to send mine round by another route, and take to a litter.

As this letter is already quite long enough, I shall not give you any further details about all I saw in that rugged country, nor about the town of Perpignan, especially as I did not make a very long stay there: the history also of the Señora Margareta and Don Francisco has led me on, and I must not abuse your patience, or tire myself out, for after such a journey as I have taken, I have naturally need of rest, although there does not seem to be much chance of my getting any.

I have been overwhelmed with visitors. The Prince of Denmark did me the honour of calling on me, accompanied by the noblemen of his suite; they assured me that the Treaty would soon be concluded, and I have remarked hitherto, that any information they have given me has been reliable.

There is in this place what is styled "the Academy of Wits;" they give out every year *bouts-rimés*, to which must be adapted lines in honour of the King, followed by four lines of prayer

for his Majesty, and a Latin motto suitable to the subject.

These *bouts-rimés* are sent about all over the kingdom, so as to exercise every one's wits; and whoever does them best gains a prize.

The following are the verses which have been judged the best; it is said that they are composed by a lady of rank, and the manner in which she has adapted them as an ovation to the King, such as he truly deserves, is both novel and refined, and has gained the approbation of all *connoisseurs;* you must tell me what *you* think of them.

It is quite a sonnet![1]

Que ne suis-je, Louis, plus belle que l'Aurore !
Que ne puis-je compter des Rois pour mes Aïeux !
Je te préférerais au plus brillant des Dieux ;
Je le dis hautement, personne ne l'ignore.

Dans ces vastes Jardins les délices de Flore,
Où la nature cède à l'Art ingénieux,
Je ferais mon plaisir d'un regard de tes yeux,
Sans songer à l'éclat que ta grandeur arbore.

Grand Roi, lorsque mes yeux te trouvent sans pareil,
C'est moins par ta Couronne, et ton riche appareil,
Que par tant de vertus dont tu sers de modèle.

Ah ! que n'es tu touché de mes tendres accents,
Mon cœur toujours rempli d'une flamme fidèle,
Brûlerait pour t'offrir un précieux encens !

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[1] Louis, why am *I* not as fair as the morning?
Why were my fathers not kings at their birth?
Thee, then, I'd choose, the brightest gods scorning,
Fearless I say it to all upon earth.

Where broad stretch the gardens, sweet Flora's delight,
Where Nature yields, vanquished, to Art's rich adorning,

The following is the prayer:[1]

"Seigneur, fais que Louis, dans une paix profonde,
Soit toujours craint, aimé de tout cet Univers,
Conserves-le, grand Dieu, pour le bonheur du monde;
Et permets pour le mien, qu'il approuve ces Vers."

And this is the motto:[2]

"Me plus virtus quàm sceptra movet,"

I cannot end my letter better than with good wishes for his Majesty, and in assuring you that I am ever, madame, your very humble—etc.

I'd joy in a glance from thine eyes' flashing light,
All else of thy grandeur how blithely then scorning!

If peerless, great king, to declare thee, I'm bold;
Think not I am dazzled by pomp and by splendour,
'Tis Virtue's fair pattern in thee I behold.

O would thou wert touched by my accents so tender!
My heart's true to thee, for thee ever sighing,
And incense it burns with a flame that's undying!—(L. B.)

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[1] Lord! grant that Louis in peace profound,
Be feared and loved, the world around;
And happy are all if his days be long,
And happy am I if he like my song!—(L. B.)

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[2] "Virtue moves me more than a sceptre."—(*Trans.*)

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